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Daily Report
Central Eurasia

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Terrorist Activity

Russia: Chechens Release Five Policemen

LD3101115396 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1011 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MAKHACHKALA, Jan 31 (INTERFAX) — Five Russian policemen from the city of Novosibirsk released by Chechen rebels flew home early on Wednesday.

Khasavyurt police chief Akhmed Adiyev, who led the Dagestani delegation to the talks with Chechen rebels, has flown with them.

The rebels agreed to free the policemen on condition that Adiyev will accompany the policemen to Novosibirsk and present them, upon his return, with a video film to confirm that they have been handed over to the Russian authorities and relatives.

The remaining 12 policemen still kept by rebels asked Adiyev to convey to the city authorities their request to do everything possible to free them.

Adiyev plans to return to Khasavyurt by Friday when he is due to meet with Chechen military chief Aslan Maskhadov.

Chechen Separatists Demand Talks With Presidential Envoy

LD3101115596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1011 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 31 (INTERFAX) — Chechen separatists who took hostage 29 Russian energy workers in early January are demanding a meeting with Presidential Envoy to Chechnya Oleg Lobov and journalists as a major condition for the liberation of hostages.

Staffers at the Grozenergo company, who have been holding talks with the gunmen, are expected to bring written demands by the gunmen to the Chechen capital Groznyy today and hand them over to the territorial administration and "power" departments, United Energy System of Russia representative Yuriy Dolin told INTERFAX. The sides are expected to start negotiations Thursday and Friday and decide what to do with the energy workers.

The Chechen gunmen's demand to have talks only with the presidential envoy in the presence of journalists "is likely to be caused by their intention to put forward new political demands," said Dolin.

The gunmen have a list of their 11 members seized by the federal troops whom they would like in exchange for the hostages. At first, they were ready to exchange each energy worker for one of the gunmen kept at detention points. Federal troops' representatives agreed to this exchange, but the gunmen altered their demands.

Dolin cited the gunmen as saying the Russian energy workers are staying in a settlement, 12 kilometers of Urus-Martan. "They are alive, unhurt and living with Chechen families," they say.

Delegation May Meet Chechens Concerning Abducted Workers

LD3001205596 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1956 GMT 30 Jan 96

[By Nikolay Styazhkin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] STAVROPOL, January 30 (ITAR-TASS) — The Stavropol region's delegation went to Chechnya on Tuesday to negotiate with rebel field commanders the release of the 29 abducted construction workers.

The 29 staff of the region's Agromontazh construction company were kidnapped in the village of Achkhoy-Martan in December 1995.

This is a second bid of the territorial administration to get in touch with the abductors for negotiations.

Stavropol regional governor Petr Marchenko told ITAR-TASS today that the first delegation led by Sergey Popov went to Chechnya a week ago. The delegation had a meeting with a messenger of rebels, but he did put forward any terms for the release of the hostages, only saying that they were alive, kept in comfort and even were given regular medical examinations.

The rebels agreed to continue contacts, on terms that the territory's delegation be limited to two authorised negotiators.

The abductors named a site in Chechnya's mountain woodland as a tentative venue for another contact.

'Disguised' Chechen Militants Kidnap Priests in Urus-Martan

LD3101121696 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1138 GMT 31 Jan 96

[By Oleg Artyushin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, January 31 (ITAR-TASS) — A representative of the international religious organization "Church in a joint action", Oleg Kalimullin, has handed over to journalists today a document issued by this organization in which it suggested its own version accounting for the kidnapping of two Russian priests, archpriest Sergey from the Moscow patriarchy and Father Anatoliy, dean of the Groznyy church of Michael Archangel.

The document says that the two priests were kidnapped at 10:30 a.m. January 29 when they were leaving the town of Urus-Martan, 38 kilometers away from Groznyy. A car belonging to the Groznyy church with the two priests inside was attacked by armed militants disguised as Interior servicemen.

The priests who were returning to Groznyy after talks with Chechen religious leaders were forced into another car which moved in the direction of the village of Yermolovka. Onlookers said that the militants belonged to a unit of a Chechen field commander, Akhmet Zakayev. However, his relatives deny that Zakayev was involved in the kidnapping.

No one has yet claimed responsibility for the act of kidnapping or made conditions for the priests' release.

The kidnapping of archpriest Sergey and Father Anatoliy has aroused strong indignation at those who dared during the holy days of Ramadan observed by the Moslems to assault two religious leaders famous for their peace-keeping aspirations, the document said.

'Secret' Details of Avrasya Ferry Terrorist Operation Reported

MM3001154896 Moscow TRUD in Russian 30 Jan 96 p 4

[Report by Vladimir Khorvatovich under the rubric "This Colorful World. TRUD and ITAR-TASS Correspondents Report": "Echo of Avrasya"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Istanbul — With the passage of time certain "secret" details of the operation to free the hostages and disarm the terrorists who seized the ferry Avrasya are becoming known.

It turns out that one of the 10 terrorists, namely Abkhaz citizen Avit Sava, somehow managed to leave the ferry unnoticed. Even though local security forces announced the capture of "all nine terrorists." But it now turns out that there were 10 of them.

It has also emerged that Raki Gisba, another Abkhaz, was carrying out special missions for bandit ringleader Mukhammed Tokdzhan [name as transliterated] (this is the correct pronunciation of his name) with Avit Sava. Their mission was very important indeed: to buy pump-action shotguns. The point is that only foreigners have the right to acquire such weapons in Turkey. The two Abkhaz, having produced Soviet-style passports, bought 10 pump-action shotguns for 16 million Turkish lira and delivered them to Trabzon. When the terrorists surrendered to the security forces near Anadol lighthouse they threw nine of the 10 shotguns into the sea. One was left, or rather was thrown onto the deck by the fleeing Sava. It is interesting that when they surrendered to the police five of the nine terrorists tried to hide among the Turkish passengers. They were found. But the police still managed to lose one. It is conjectured that he is now already on Russian territory, possibly in Chechnya.

Military Activity

Federal Armor Reportedly Kill Civilians in Chechnya

LD3001182496 Moscow NTV in Russian 1600 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Two Federal Security Service staff died in Groznyy over the last 24 hours, when their car was fired on in one of the suburbs. The military announced today that throughout the republic, the Dudayev fighters shelled federal positions 20 times. In response, the federal forces carried out operations to flush out fighters in various districts. Local inhabitants complain that they are suffering from both sides. Our special correspondents in Chechnya report.

[Unidentified correspondent, over video of federal armor moving along a road, local people milling around, red car with bullet holes in windshield] This morning federal troops blockaded the Nazran-Goragorskiy-Groznyy highway 10 kilometers from the Chechen capital. About 50 armored vehicles massed round the village of Dolinskiy. People crowded around the outskirts of the village, listening in alarm to the crackle of volleys and trying to understand what was going on. Something was on fire in the village. At about 1100, the armor began moving away from Dolinskiy. Automatic machine gunners covered the withdrawal, firing in the air to try to hold back hysterical women who wanted to get through to a red Niva with Chechen license plates that had been shelled.

The federal troops moved off in the direction of Zakan, continuing to fire and leaving their trophy to the Chechens.

We were unable to get any official version of what had happened from the military. According to the unofficial version, the convoy had been fired on in the village by the fighters, and in retaliation, the military carried out an operation to comb the area.

The Chechens' version of the incident is completely different.

[Begin unidentified villager recording] They cordoned off the village completely. The rest you saw yourself.

They opened fire in a disorderly way. There are two cars over there that were fired on, and they took bodies out of one of them. They took bodies from over there, too, but we do not know where they put them. [end recording]

[Correspondent] The driver of the Niva, according to the Chechens, was hit by accident when he was so careless as to drive too close to the armored personnel carriers; when he realized his mistake and started to turn round, a volley rang out.

What actually happened in Dolinskiy village, why so many armored vehicles were used in an operation to comb the area, and how many casualties there were in the process, are questions that will most likely remain unanswered.

Russian Forces in Chechnya Disarm Mines, Seize Ammunition

LD3001164896 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1459 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, Jan 30 (INTERFAX) — Experts of the interim Russian interior department defused two mines in the Chechen capital Groznyy yesterday. They confiscated over 300 cartridges and other ammunition, a spokesman for the Chechen interior ministry told INTERFAX. One militant was killed during a search for members of illegal armed formations, he added.

Though the public-political and criminal situation in Chechnya remains difficult, it is under the control of federal forces, he said.

The spokesman confirmed that the referent of the department for inter-church relations of the Moscow Patriarchy Father Sergey Zhigulin and the senior priest of the Groznyy Orthodox Church Anatoliy Chistousov had been taken hostage by militants from the group led by Akhmed Zakayev. They were captured on Monday morning, four kilometers along the Urus Martan—Alkhan Yurt route.

Meanwhile, a spokesman for the Russian public and political movement "the Union of Russian Muslims" denied information on the alleged release of Father Sergey.

Movement leader Nadir Khachilayev, now in Chechnya, plans to meet Dzhokhar Dudayev on Tuesday to clarify the fate of those kidnapped.

If nothing is clarified, an inter-confessional delegation plans to leave Moscow for Chechnya on Wednesday.

Underfunding Means Supply Cuts for Russian Troops in Chechnya

LD3001150596 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1309 GMT 30 Jan 96

[By Anatoliy Yurkin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, January 30 (ITAR-TASS) — The poor financing of the Russian Army results in cutting supplies for servicemen who are in action, and the troops in Chechnya are in the worst situation, a Russian military official said.

Lieutenant-General Vladimir Kutuzov, Head of the Russian Army logistics, told ITAR-TASS on Tuesday that a group of experts, including lawyers and logistical specialists, after inspecting federal troops in Chechnya, said that there was a need to adopt a state programme for financing the units, and the North-Caucasian military district should be supplied "in accordance with special and priority norms."

The general said that the experts' report had been submitted to the Ministry of Defence and the Prosecutor-General's office.

In 1995, the Russian government failed to pay off the debt to supplyers of food, uniform, electricity and other basics for the army. The approved military budget does not allow to purchase enough food for good three-time daily ration for soldiers and buy uniform and footwear either, Kutuzov said.

The military have presented a report on all these problems to the Russian prosecutor-general.

Political Reaction

Russian Duma To Approve Chechen Hostage Commission Members

LD3001212396 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1437 GMT 30 Jan 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Igor Zhukov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 30 Jan (ITAR-TASS) — It is planned on Wednesday [31 January] to finally approve the members of the parliamentary commission that is to be actively involved in the process of releasing the hostages in Chechnya. Fifteen deputies have already said they are prepared to work in the commission.

One of those behind the creation of the commission, Deputy Yuliy Rybakov, told the ITAR-TASS correspondent this at the end of today's session.

He said that after the commission was granted the powers and the necessary agreements, the deputies would leave for Chechnya where a meeting was planned with Aslan Maskhadov and a number of the field commanders who might be holding the hostages.

"If we manage to save even some of the people then we can consider our mission to have been completed," Yuliy Rybakov said. The commission's main task is to help release servicemen and civilians who are being forcibly held and to seek those who went missing during the armed conflict in Chechnya and Dagestan.

Dudayev Proposes Candidates To Stop War in Chechnya

NC3001192796 Baku TURAN in English
1341 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku/29.01.96/TURAN—Chechnya proposed Boris Gromov, Mikhail Gorbachev, Gennadiy Zuganov and Grigory Yavlinskiy "to join the process on speeding up the adoption of the decision to stop the Russian-Chechen war," reads a statement of Chechen-Press agency which was received today by TURAN. The statement notes the people of Chechnya see in them "a sensible politicians, realists able to speed up the adoption of the political decision on stop of the Russian-Chechen war."

Choice of these persons is grounded by the fact "one can speak with the present leadership about nothing but the war."

In this respect Chechnya states:

1. It is ready to change Russian POWs for the Chechens which are in the Russian captivity;

2. Chechnya appreciates mediatory mission in this question of Gromov, Gorbachev, Zuganov and the others who "is able to demonstrate the qualities of real politician."

3. Chechnya authorises the citizens of Russia Nikolay Gonchar and Aleksandr Krasnov to carry out necessary arrangements.

A place for such action can be a populated area Spetsovskaya, the statement notes.

The statement was signed by Movladi Udugov, the Minister of Press and Information in the government of Dudayev.

Russia: Khasbulatov Analyzes Events in Chechnya

964F0824A Moscow ZAVTRA in Russian
No. 2, Jan 96 pp 1, 3

[Article by R. Ruslan Khasbulatov: "Chechnya: 'The Kremlin's New Course'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] From the editors—The war in Chechnya is a perverse act of Yeltsin's regime, which is capable neither of building nor of winning but only of destroying—parliaments, cities, relations among peoples...and long-suffering Russia itself.

Yeltsin's power has nurtured Dudayev's criminal regime. It has turned Chechnya into a black hole which has swallowed up Russian billions in oil, and arms, and given narcotics, violence, and robbery to Russia in return. Yeltsin's government, obeying the will of the petroleum bigwigs, protecting the "petroleum pipe" and not Russia, has brought about a slaughter, placing untrained Russian units under attack from Dudayev's men, and littering the streets of Groznyy with Russian corpses. Yeltsin's government, immoral and criminal, has swept the Russian city of Groznyy from the face of earth, destroying, like Hitler in Germany, thousands of peaceful Chechens and Russians. And it, the Yeltsin government, did not allow the Army to take advantage of the fruits of attack but stopped the troops when there was a week left before Dudayev's men would be routed. And it, the government, provoked Basayev to a terrorist act in Budennovsk, first giving the order to storm the hospital with the hostages, cramming the wards with their corpses, and then, when the bloody operation was almost over, it abandoned Basayev, leaving all of Russia in amazement and terror. And it, this perverted government, when it should have been fighting, began absurd negotiations, and when the possibility of peace glimmered, it began to fight without distinction. Chernomyrdin, having gathered his paltry 10 percent in the Duma elections, exploited the blood of Chechnya and paid for his "victory" with Russian and Chechen corpses.

The blood is flowing again today. Russian convoys, caught up in ambushes, are being blown up, Gudermes has been swept from the face of the earth, and the military campaign Chechnya-2 is in full swing.

At this terrible hour when reports about dead hostages are coming from Kizlyar, when the attack on Kizlyar will inevitably detonate a nationwide political catastrophe, we have decided to publish R. Khasbulatov's article, familiarizing the readers with the views of a politician whose concern for the fate of the Chechen people sometimes stands in contradiction to a general Russian approach, who, not accepting Zavgayev, overestimates, in our view, Dudayev's influence, who, accusing the Moscow regime of cruelty, does not notice the bloodshed caused by Dudayev, but who is clearly aware that the Chechen slaughter is another crime of the government aimed against Russian statehood.

1. The War Continues

My worst predictions have come true. Zavgayev and his protectors in the Kremlin have done everything they can to prevent peace from coming to the Chechen land. In fact, how could one count on the idea that the embattled Chechnya, which was not subdued by the regular Russian Army of 100,000, would suddenly agree to become a vassal of some Zavgayev? How could one assume that the "tricks" would work here and someone could deceitfully be proclaimed the "head of the republic"? And that in the same deceitful way it would be possible to balance the "elections" to the State Duma and again declare the "winner" to be Chernomyrdin's party—the party of war which has brought death, destruction, and suffering to every Chechen home?

On 14 December Dudayev's Resistance detachments took control of Gudernes. They began fierce battle against the federal troops. More than 200 enlisted men and officers from the federal forces died under artillery fire and aerial bombs, and hundreds of peaceful citizens perished under the rubble of their own homes. The Resistance detachments took control of Urus-Martan and Achkhoy-Martan. Combat activities began in the mountain village of Shata where two regiments were quartered. In essence, all the population points, following Groznyy's example, ended up under the control of the Resistance detachments and the tension grew continuously.

In Moscow the compliant mass media continue to trumpet certain "victories," certain "healthy forces" under Zavgayev's leadership which could even go beyond the boundaries of the Groznyy Airport....

The culmination of the negotiating process came at the end of June 1995 with the signing of the well-known Agreement, which meant the same thing as has been meant by the classical "cease-fire agreement" throughout the thousand-year history of war.

But this agreement was destined for a difficult time. It was immediately attacked first by the Russian defense and internal affairs ministers and then by "political experts" of various stripes, and later by Duma politicians. The main object of criticism were the allegedly "one-sided concessions to the Chechen side." Poor A. Volskiy, who expended so much effort on reaching a peaceful conclusion to the conflict, who began to be accused from all sides almost of "treason," was forced to take a defensive position, and he was to be pitied. Soon rumors began to spread that he had been "called out" of Chechnya (as though he had occupied some important government post!)

Having reached agreement on a number of military issues, the negotiating parties during the past two months did not take a step into the area of political issues in order at least to reinforce the success that had been achieved. Since the end of September there has been a clearly marked dangerous tendency in the policy of federal authorities—toward breakdown of the negotiations with the warring Chechen side, after first accusing that side of breaking the Agreement of 30 July (an unconstructive approach to negotiations, delay, and violations of individual points, etc.)

Let me remind you of the main things in the Agreement: to refrain from engaging in combat activities, to call a halt to the armed conflict, and to withdraw Russian troops from inside the Chechen Republic according to an established schedule—on the one hand, and at the same time to disarm detachments of the Resistance and disband them—on the other; to replace the latter in the villages, local self-defense detachments were to have been organized under the jurisdiction of the rural authorities.

At first this proceeded fairly successfully, the more so since certain amounts of monetary remuneration (bribes) were paid for arms that were turned in. Then suddenly there were "interruptions"— there was not enough money and the fighters of the Resistance who had come to turn in their arms went back to their detachments with a "certain amount of baggage," having first waited many hours for Russian military representatives who never came. Then they stopped turning in their arms altogether—after a mass propaganda campaign undertaken in the mass media, where the federal side "exposed" the Chechen side which was continuously refusing to turn in its weapons. The final straw was the conflict that arose regarding the "self-defense detachments"—the Russian side raised the question of the legality of these detachments even though their appearance had been envisioned by the Agreement. Later it became clear that this new question did not arise by accident—it became apparent that they intended to undermine the Agreement itself. As for these notorious self-defense detachments—the need for them was dictated by the situation; the criminal nature of the whole situation had forced the residents of the villages to organize self-defense.

But the Chechen side did not understand the reasons for the revision of this point of the Agreement by the

Russian side and did not "buy into" this maneuver, taking the formally correct (uncompromising) position and insisting on the fulfillment of this obligation, while in fact it played into the hands of the federal side which was trying to find a pretext for interrupting the negotiations and breaking the Agreement.

To the surprise of his command and of Moscow, General A. Romanov, who apparently after torturous equivocation had come to the conclusion that it was necessary to end the crisis exclusively by peaceful means, objected to such dishonest devices. On the surface this seems both strange and unexpected if you take into account that the general was an active participant in the Kremlin putsch in the autumn of 1993 and, along with Yerin and Kulikov, headed the troops of the MVD [Ministry of Internal Affairs], OMON [Special Forces Militia Detachment] etc., which threatened Parliament and the Constitution. Possibly an understanding of this sin and the guilt that was multiplied many times over as a result of the Chechen war led the general to the firm conviction that it was necessary to complete his mission for establishing peace in an honest way.

Romanov is a man of action, and he had great realistic possibilities of getting beyond the military-political gains and achieving this goal, since for him it had taken form as the main goal of the commander of the group of forces. This is probably what complicated his relations with the minister of internal affairs. And how "timely" (6 October) was the attempt on his life when he was supposed to meet with me! This attempt provided an occasion to finally bury the Russian-Chechen negotiations, although the federal authorities had not decided to announce the annulment of the Agreement of 30 July. Moreover, the point of this agreement regarding the permanent stationing of two brigades of Russian forces on the territory of Chechnya without clarifying the number of personnel in these brigades was advantageous to the federal side (again from a formal standpoint, although essentially such "placement" would not do anything: Chechnya is not some kind of strategic or tactical asset, and the many interpretations in this plane are erroneous).

During those days when meeting with A. Maskajdov I was convinced that the Chechen side had to insist on resuming the negotiations— for Russian society was constantly being fed the idea that the Chechen side did not want to engage in negotiations and had broken them off. On 12 October the leader of the mission from the OSCE in Groznyy, Shandor Nesarosh, announced that the Chechen side was prepared to resume negotiations immediately and at the same time insisted that the Russian side fulfill the commitments it had made previously.

But the negotiations were not resumed. The federal authorities began to act out the next scenario from their bloody spectacle: They began to prepare to replace certain bankrupt collaborators with another—one who had been bankrupt more than five years ago— Zavgayev—but now he suddenly was declared to almost the "savior of the nation."

The revival of the "Supreme Soviet of Chechen Republic" and its "absurd laws on elections of the head of the republic," the Kremlin's flirting with Khasbulatov, who supposedly "had to be drawn into the negotiating process" (while refusing the negotiations), the accelerated signing of the Moscow Agreement and, finally, the falsified "elections" under the thunder of missile fire and mass terror, the solemn announcements to the effect that "now a legitimate power had appeared in the Chechen Republic and everyone who was against this power was a gangster"—all this is evidence of the new political course of a part of the highest Russian federal bureaucracy toward destroying the Chechen Republic, splitting it up, and dispersing its people.

2. "Chernomyrdin—Zavgayev"

A special role in Zavgayev's legitimation was to have been fulfilled by playing with the "Agreement on the basic principles of relations between the Russian Federation and the Chechen Republic"—an idea stolen from my peace plan. But I had suggested that such a document be signed between the warring (or—conflicting) parties, which was a logical measure if the federal authorities wanted peace. It was this treaty (or Agreement) that would have laid the basis for a complete cease-fire and the beginning of a peaceful, healthy process in Chechnya.

The signing of the "Agreement" by the federal government with its former clerk reminded one of something like an "agreement between the head and the tail," and taking into account the objective attitude of the majority of the population toward the "representative from Chechnya," it produced the effect that is produced by gasoline when you pour it on a smoldering fire.

The people are by no means fools, as they are thought to be in the Russian corridors of power. They immediately understood the intention—the task of the "signers" was to strengthen the position of the "head of the republic" on the eve of the elections on 17 December, a date announced precisely so that none of the other candidates could enter into the struggle with such a short time left—only one month for the entire election campaign. God forbid, they thought, that the victory would go to Khasbulatov—they could not even count on their own effective "falsifying capacities." Another factor that drove Moscow to an "agreement" was the publication in the capital's newspaper VEK of the draft of the treaty between Russia and Chechnya which I prepared back in October, and which I coordinated with many influential republic social organizations, including the leaders of the Resistance movement. Of course, the appearance of the draft of my treaty in the press forced Moscow to make certain concessions in the "agreement" it signed with respect to authority for the Chechen Republic (although it is not very likely that they will be able to take advantage of it—it is destined to be suppressed).

Nonetheless, the effect achieved in Chechnya was the opposite of the one counted on by those who had prepared and signed the document. Even Zavgayev's supporters, having found out from television on 8 December about this "historic document," said: "Some were fighting for Chechnya's freedom, while others, working in the apparatus of the Russian president and, like lackeys, convincing the authorities to bring troops into their republic—are signing 'agreements' with them. This is a betrayal of the people, their feelings, and their national pride. This is degradation of the people...."

So the "Agreement" not only did not produce the expected effect of sharply strengthening Zavgayev's reputation, but rather increased the overall tension in the republic and caused explosions with new military actions, including in Gudernes.

This "Agreement," in the first place, led to the de facto annulment of the cease-fire Agreement signed by the combatant Chechen side on 30 July; in the second place, this "Agreement" reinforced the new policy of the federal authorities of refusing to grant the combatant Chechen side a military-political status; and in the third place it provided a "justification" for the federal side to completely refuse to conduct negotiations regarding political issues with the Resistance. In general this was a backslide from the political realities that were recognized during the period of the Budennovsk events.

Hence, the prevalence in the lexicon of the high-level military of such terms as "gangsters," the "gang of the formation," and "terrorists," but they, these "terrorists," are supported by the majority of their people and control almost all the territory of the republic, forcing the upstart "head of the republic" and representatives of the federal president to live in the airport (near their plane) guarded almost by an Army brigade.

3. "Gudernes-2"

Early in the morning of 14 December a battalion of Dudayev's troops entered Gudernes, turning over the blockhouse of the Russian troops, and suppressed the resistance of the federal forces in Gudernes itself—although the forces here were considerable, on the order of a thousand. They were able to organize defense only at the railroad station and around the command building. They ended up surrounded. In turn, Gudernes itself soon ended up surrounded by a solid blockade of federal troops.

At first support forces from Groznyy rushed to help on armored personnel carriers and infantry combat vehicles. Near Gudernes they were soundly defeated and scattered (up to a hundred were killed and wounded and about two dozen missing in action from this battle alone). After such a defeat, the federal command began to conduct air and artillery attacks on the city and reinforced its blockade.

...Multistory buildings in the central streets were turned into fortified positions and weapon emplacements. Connection with the outside world was cut off, including with Groznyy. Journalists were not allowed into Gudernes or near it—the federal military command was afraid that the people would find out about another hopeless war which they were carrying on for the sake of "Russia's unity and integrity," but with the objective of establishing some sort of puppet regime in Groznyy.

At the center of the city, in the words of the refugees, lay corpses of Russian soldiers. It was impossible to gather them up since the streets were constantly covered by sniper fire. For a week the central part of Gudernes was fired on by artillery and aircraft of federal forces, and therefore many peaceful residents were killed and wounded (more than 300). From the center of the city the people went to its upper part, those who were unable to break through the blockade, and they remained in basements during the storming. Gudernes is one of the most important points in Chechnya. It is a large transportation center through which pass not only main railroads and highways, but also the oil pipeline for early Caspian oil. If the Resistance had set the task of keeping Gudernes and had retained the city for a relatively prolonged period of time—from the standpoint of Russian interest in this region, this would be a catastrophe. But there is nothing to show that the battalion that seized Gudernes was defeated or forced to abandon the city. Most likely retaining the city was not included in the plans of the command of the Resistance military detachments. The military leaders of the federal forces after a number of unsuccessful attempts to break into Gudernes began to prepare a military operation to take the city back again. Apparently this was the largest "successful" general troop operation of the domestic forces in the history of Russia. If one does not count the fact that in April the domestic forces and OMON detachments "successfully took" Samashki, although there was no armed opponent at all. Incidentally, after Samashki an MVD group in western Chechnya under the command of General Antonov (that is what General Romanov was called) tried unsuccessfully for two months to take Bamut and the adjacent hills, although aircraft of the Russian Air Force with the help of special bombs destroyed the most difficult object in the Bamut region to storm—an underground strategic missile base that had been modernized for all-around defense. The precise number of enlisted men and officers of the Russian Army who died is carefully concealed. This is easy to do, since an immense number of "contractors" are not entered in the column "killed" or "taken captive" at all. As many people in Groznyy affirm, their lives were not taken into account at all during the course of the Chechen war. According to figures from the Russian command, the overall number of people killed in the battles near Gudernes and in taking it again during the week amounted to about 100. Residents of this city give a different figure—more than 300. The precise figures are kept secret. Be that as it may, this was another serious defeat for the Russian Army. It will perish itself and will destroy Chechnya and its peaceful people, and it will inspire indignation and hatred in the hearts of the people.

Detachments of the Resistance, having carried out a limited task and shown that Zavgayev's puppet regime, even with powerful military support from Russia, was not capable of getting a foothold here— left the city without difficulty. Actually, this operation showed once again that if the Kremlin is interested in peace, the only way of achieving it is through negotiations with the combatant Chechen side, a return to the policy that contributed to the signing of the cease-fire Agreement of 30 July 1995, strict compliance with it, and the development of political issues, which should have been the subject of negotiations. There is no other way. No puppets acting on orders from the Kremlin can rule Chechnya. What other proof of this is needed?

4. Cruelty as a Factor in War

There are many reasons for the Chechen war—they have been revealed, studied, and it will be necessary to study them and reveal them even more. One reason, nonetheless, defies analysis and public discussion. It is the predisposition of those who bear and wield the highest power toward cruelty and violence, especially malicious vengeance.

Nothing else can explain the continuation of the war in Chechnya, although it is possible to understand the initial stage: They did not anticipate everything that could happen. But when it became clear that the war would lead only to out-and-out mass murders of people, when, finally, they sat down at the negotiating table and began to create stable preconditions for peace—why and for whose sake in the Kremlin and the federal government did they break off these negotiations and again become enmeshed in military actions as they did in Gudernes?

No "Russian state interests" can explain the new phase of aggravation of the situation in Chechnya when Zavgayev's collaborative regime was imposed on the people by force and in order to retain his illusory power (he has no real power, and it seems that it is not anticipated) more military activity was provoked in Chechnya. The troops also sustained a serious defeat in the mountains and in the village of Shatoy.

The units of the federal forces rushing out of Groznyy into Gudernes ended up in an ambush, and almost all the soldiers and officers were killed, except some who were taken captive. In general this is another military engagement—a difficult defeat for the federal group of forces in Chechnya. And Russian enlisted men and officers died not defending the "integrity and unity of the Russian Federation" but in order to reinforce the positions of a certain Zavgayev.

Do Russian soldiers, Russian enlisted men, officers, generals, and the mothers of these boys understand this?

Let me remind those who perhaps know nothing about it or have already managed to forget:

For about 20 years Zavgayev has been in charge of the Checheno-Ingush Republic and "ran it into the ground"—all the socioeconomic preconditions were created in order that even the slightest pretext would serve as a reason for outcry of public dissatisfaction. And this is what happened in August-September of 1991 when Zavgayev's Supreme Soviet and he himself were driven out. The main reasons were the mass accusations against Zavgayev of corruption, bribery, and various financial and personnel machinations—these were the facts that were presented in all the Groznyy newspapers of that period. Anyone who is interested may read them, since they are in the libraries. There were absolutely no other reasons for his being driven out of the republic. Although, trying somehow to justify it, Zavgayev and certain of his people from the former Supreme Soviet of Checheno-Ingushetia are trying to blame some kind of "intervention of the Supreme Soviet of Russia." These are pathetic tales of weak and insignificant people.

This person has now been instructed to "shift the Russian-Chechen war" to the plane of an "intra-Chechen war." He has already carried out this task—Gudernes is evidence of this. In order to carry out this task, Zavgayev needed at least 10 armed Chechens who were ready to give their lives for him and fight for him. He did not have them nor, it seems, will he. Consequently, Russian soldiers and officers have to fight for him. P. Grachev and A. Kulikov's idea of creating for Zavgayev "a personal army of 20,000" illustrates better than anything else the absolute inability of the individuals who have been granted an immense amount of power in the Russian Federation to think for themselves. If these people do not understand that the "army" they plan to create (and perhaps are already creating) will be led by just about anybody but not Zavgayev—what good are these "marshals"?

I think the Russian leaders were well aware of this circumstance when they decided to refuse to negotiate with the combatant Chechen side and when they decided to reject the Agreement signed on 30 July to call a halt to the military conflict, and when they destroyed the situation that had developed favorably for peace, right down to the point of suddenly declaring "elections of the head of the republic" on 20 November of this year. Consequently, the conflict was especially provoked, planned ahead of time, and enlisted men and officers were cold-bloodedly placed under the bullets of detachments of the Resistance. Is this not a manifestation of pathological cruelty on the part of the high officials who decided to undermine the course toward a peaceful solution to the conflict and enter on the path of war again—but no longer with the objective of "imposing constitutional order" but in order to strengthen positions suitable to the Kremlin of a new, no less criminal regime and to protect it from the dissatisfied population?

Cruelty as an element of politics is not a new phenomenon in the practice of the political regime in power. All these people, who personify the modern Kremlin political regime, personally voted in favor of the Chechen war—they consistently utilize the cruelest means of suppressing the dissatisfaction of the population, means that are incompatible with the law and their rights (including international human rights). Let us recall the depravity of the Moscow police at the infamous Ostankino in 1992—could the police really have acted so cruelly without completely clear orders to do so? And the violence against the demonstrators on 1 May 1993 in Moscow when the Moscow police, on direct instructions from the authorities, covered peaceful people with blood: It is difficult to forget the wild depravity of the defenders of law and order against the elderly, women, and young people—all this was shown on television throughout the entire world. Then, I recall, I spoke on television and called for protection of people in the Russian Federation from the arbitrary behavior of the "butchers" unleashed by the cruel, heartless authorities.

It turns out that among the latter there are still those who are "offended" by my television statement when I tried to save the face of the authorities before the outraged Muscovites! Are the idiots hoping to be justified by history?

But then there was a strong and respected Supreme Soviet which restrained manifestations of cruelty on the part of high "statesmen." That was the situation when someone wanted to unleash a large-scale war between the Ingush and the Ossetians. Then, in 1992, we were able to put a halt to this incipient slaughter in a couple of days.

Therefore they, these maniacally cruel officials, vented their fierce malice and hatred in the Supreme Soviet itself, including redoubled hatred experienced at their own risk before the possible defeat of 3 October (and the defeat was guaranteed if the people had not been led to Ostankino).

And then the Chechen war, which is largely explained by exclusive motives of the internal need for cruel, monstrous actions. Therefore they are trying to instill in the largest possible number of people the habit of murder and violence so that this "habit" will become normal behavior for the "market-based person." Creating a hotbed of "ethnic war"—what better way to justify violence as a means of achieving "stability"!

This is the practical policy of our current authorities. Consequently, the question arises: Can these authorities fight against the elements of fascism? No, they cannot, since they are creating the preconditions for its appearance. It is precisely the authorities who are sowing discord among the peoples, generating hatred, and creating preconditions for persecution of "individuals of Caucasian and Chechen nationality" throughout our enormous country.

Historically, great-power chauvinism gained social ground in Russia during the period of its sudden weakening because of various factors—unsuccessful wars, domestic troubles, palace revolutions, when the customary etatism, outside of which society could not develop normally, became weak, concentrating its energy on palace intrigues. In a number of articles in RUSSKAYA IDEYA in 1993 I demonstrated this in greater or lesser detail. Therefore it is no wonder that in the rhetoric and the slogans of representatives of various political forces—both left and right and those that claim centrism—all of them have a great power-chauvinistic element. And this element is combined in an odd way with the requirements of "democracy for ourselves" and approval (or a tolerant attitude) of out-and-out mass violence used against others (Chechnya is an example of this). Almost every day there are threats against the peaceful population of this unfortunate republic, sometimes from Minister of Internal Affairs Kulikov and sometimes from General Shkirko (who, incidentally, planned the disgraceful operation of the tank campaign of the military opposition on Groznyy on 26 November 1994). In our "democratic society" these statements, which disgrace society itself and show society's semiservile condition, go unnoticed. Is this not incentive for accomplishing a military coup, and is this not evidence of the preparedness of society to "swallow" another revolution? And their threats on television to move to even crueler actions not only do not encounter condemnation in society but even find "understanding." Is it worthwhile to curtsy to "society," declaring it to be extremely wise, having first crammed it full of the narcotic of propaganda to such an extent that it would willingly vote for those who declare that Chechen villages should be covered with napalm from the air. This is the direct result of the policy of the authorities and not a cost of democracy, as the representatives of these authorities try to make it out to be.

In all of this there is the strongest drama of society which, on the one hand, is being inspired with democratic ideals (Western values), and on the other hand—by the concrete cruel "work" of the authorities these same "invaluable democratic values" are being knocked out of their heads.

The "democratic authorities" have armed themselves with a dangerous weapon—hatred. Since 1992 these authorities, filled with hatred, have cruelly beaten up the Parliament, and in order to make white out of black and black out of white, the authorities and their ass-licking toadies have called this cruel assault "a confrontation between the two branches of power"! The dumbstruck society has swallowed this bald-faced lie as well! What comes next is even more "remarkable"! The resistance of the fatally beaten Parliament has been called a "putsch," a "conspiracy," an "uprising of the 'red- and-brown shirts'"—and nobody has suffered from shame, nobody has been disturbed, and the respectable gentlemen from IZVESTIYA repeat this bald-faced lie from one issue to another to this very day. Obviously they are afraid that in time the people might remember those who demanded from the Kremlin the "promised storming of the Supreme Soviet."

Hating Gorbachev, they overthrew the Union. Hating the democratic and national elected Russian Parliament—they shot them and drove out the agencies of popular power and self-government—the Soviets which were valued highly by the "father of Russian democracy" Academician Sakharov. It is no accident that the academician called his draft of the new Constitution the "Constitution of the Soviet Republics of Europe and Asia."

Hating the indomitable "component" of the Federation, Chechnya, they shot its people while at the same time not sparing the enlisted men and officers of their own army. Where will this hatred, cruelty, and falsehood of the rulers lead tomorrow? Hatred engenders hatred. It is impossible to recall any preceding power that was hated (and despised) as fiercely as today's. This hatred is mutual. Therefore the authorities hasten to declare all who disagree with them to be fascists, putschists, and so forth, although the path to putsches and revolutions and fascists and other radical-extremist phenomena was paved and is being paved by these authorities themselves—because of their stupidity, their treachery, and their cruelty.

The inadequacy of the state figures to the posts they hold is manifested with the greatest clarity in such a unique phenomenon as the prolonged internal war on the territory of Russia itself, the first in 100 years: Does this not mean that this power is bankrupt? But it also means bankruptcy of the forces that are trying to replace this power, not understanding the essence of what is going on and acting with a force that is incapable of providing an alternative that is adequate to the conditions of the country and public moods. And therefore one gets the impression that they are only striving to become a pathetic likeness of the existing regime.

A complete lack of understanding of the essence of national-state interests of Russia is a typical quality of representatives of the upper echelon of the political elite. Does this not explain the fact that Russia no longer exists as a great power. And the shamanistic incantations on the part of leaders of all stripes that we are a great power is merely a confirmation of this. Nobody had any doubt that the USSR was a great power, but the official representatives of the Union considered it simply inconvenient to say that what was obvious to the entire world. And the phrase "great power" was rarely used. This was also a manifestation of greatness, although true greatness requires much else, above all a high status for the citizen in the state, his confidence, the respect the state has for him, and society's control over this same power.

As a military-political factor of global significance, Russia is rapidly losing its role and it is even losing the interest of other powers. This has become abundantly clear to all citizens who are very far removed from politics with respect to the situation with the Balkan crisis. Neither the opinion of the Russian authorities nor Russia itself ended up being needed. And the "kitchen" hysterics of the authorities showed only their pathetic role as players who had played their trump cards long ago.

The world community needs Russia only as an integrated part of the world economy with significant and promising raw material supplies (incidentally, they are by no means unlimited, as they are sometimes considered to be on the pages of the press). Most likely within about 15-20 years and possibly much sooner Russia will cease being a nuclear power as well. The Kremlin's Chechen war, which is completely an improvisation of this power, showed to everyone with even a small amount of common sense that this power in and of itself is the most egregious disgrace of Russian society and turns a deaf ear to the basest passions of power—cruelty and hatred.

Possibly today we are witnesses to how implacable History is leafing through the last pages of a political regime that was established as a result of the "great October revolution" of 1993. The Chechen war is one of the constituent parts of this regime and shows too well that as long as this regime exists, there will not be peace in Chechnya, there will be war and bloodshed, the nutritive environment for terrorism and crime will remain. The latter, in turn, will be transformed into a power structure—as a factor in the blackmail and pressure upon public opinion to reinforce the autocratic revival of the state. The Chechen crisis will have to be resolved by the next authorities of Russia, the truly democratic and patriotic ones.

EU Grants CIS $2.9 Billion in Aid for 4 Years

LD3001185096 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 1100 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Council of the European Union at foreign ministers level has approved in principle the new regulations of the program of technological aid to the CIS countries for the next four years. During that period, 13 CIS countries and Mongolia will receive 2.2 billion Ecu from the EC budget, which amounts to $2.9 billion at today's exchange rate.

CIS: ITAR-TASS Carries Press Review for 31 Jan

LD3101091796 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0522 GMT 31 Jan 96

["Press Review" — ITAR-TASS headline]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, January 31 (ITAR-TASS) — Under the title "Ratification of the Start-of Russian politicians", the IZVESTIYA newspaper carries an article dealing with the starting debate of the treaty by the State Duma (Russian parliament lower house) Geopolitics Committee.

The daily notes that "a great political gamble on tactics and strategy of the election race for the presidency will develop around the ratification of the Strategic Arms Treaty-2 (START-2)".

According to the newspaper, the State Duma is not likely to ratify the document before the elections, on which the United States (where the U.S. Congress approved the treaty recently) insists.

The ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA newspaper features an interview with Russian premier Viktor Chernomyrdin to the American newspaper Today. Turning to the coming presidential elections this summer, Chernomyrdin noted: "If President Boris Yeltsin decides to run for the second term, we shall do our best for his victory at the presidential elections".

The same newspaper runs the article "Apostle of privatisation" where it examines reasons for the resignation of former first vice-premier Anatoliy Chubays. "The course of economic reforms in Russia in mid-1995 exposed an insoluble contradiction between the tough monetary policy of Chubays and real economic processes," the newspaper writes.

"Failing to find a solution for this collision which provoked dangerous social upheavals, Chubays made the greatest contribution to the victory of communists at the general elections which became 'the last drop'," the newspaper stresses.

The army newspaper KRASNAYA ZVEZDA features an interview with Belarusian Defence Minister Leonid Maltsev. Turning to prospects for military cooperation between countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Belarusian minister points "to the need for developing and strengthening cooperation in every way".

"I regard as extremely important the fact that we (Russia and Belarus) have made the first moves to fill provisions of the treaty on collective security of CIS states with concrete content," the minister said.

"Cooperation in the military sphere between Belarus and Russia has risen to a qualitatively new level. I believe that other states of the Commonwealth should follow this road," he emphasised.

The ARGUMENTY I FAKTY weekly carries an article on the arms "black" market in Russia in its today's issue. "Some 80,000 criminal firearms 'circulated' in the entire former Soviet Union in 1986, a decade ago," the weekly writes.

"This figure stands now at more than 100,000 in Moscow alone. The criminal arsenal grows due to smuggling from abroad to a great extent. If one desires very much, he can purchase even a super-rapid Angrem pistol with which American secret services are armed," the weekly stressed.

ARGUMENTY I FAKTY quotes opinions of people who work in Russian power-wielding structures, on organising struggle against Chechen terrorism. An officer of the counterintelligence service believes that "the most valuable intelligence information drowns in a bureaucratic quagmire and in inter-departmental wrangling.

"The system of struggle against terrorism which was in operation in the past, has been broken up due to poorly thought-out pseudo-reforms." Representatives from commando units and borderguards note that they will have to fight terrorists empty-handed soon.

There is no money to purchase advanced new weapons with which it is possible to carry out operations on nabbing criminals without blood.

Among such "bloodless" weapons, they instance a laser rifle which deranges terrorists' eyesight for a long time and a U.S.-made acoustic bomb deranging coordination of criminals' movements.

The article also notes that it is necessary to have 5,000-6,000 billion roubles to fence off Russia from Chechnya with "an iron curtain". On the other hand, Russian authorities allocate 16,200 billion roubles this year alone to restore the Chechen economy.

"How much money and, what's the main thing, human lives will be lost there in future?" the weekly asks.

IZVESTIYA writes about a scandal around Mikhail Monastyrskiy, 50, who turned from a candidate with a criminal past into a member of the State Duma. He ran as number No. 7 on the list of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) for the State Duma.

"The NTV television company showed a detailed clip on the commercial and criminal past of the Liberal Democrat from St. Petersburg," the newspaper writes.

"However, the public at large does not know even a more sensational fact: on November 29, Monastyrskiy was expelled from the LDPR list by a decision of the Central Election Commission (CEC), while the same CEC restored him on the list after the elections on December 29."

CEC secretary Alexandra Veshnyakova commented on this extraordinary decision by the Central Election Commission to IZVESTIYA.

According to Veshnyakova, the story with the Yabloko, Great Power and other election associations had ended in a big scandal when the commission decided to observe the letter of the law (Eds: the CEC initially barred the Yabloko and Great Power movements for the election campaign for minor procedural mistakes). The Supreme Court had ruled actions by the commission as unlawful.

"Commission members were already tired of fighting, disputing and proving their righteousness. Therefore, they did not display a principled attitude and met halfway the LDPR election bloc," IZVESTIYA quotes the CEC secretary.

Russia: Chernomyrdin, Gore View Results of Commission Talks

LD3101005896 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0001 GMT 31 Jan 96

[By ITAR-TASS special correspondent]

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington, 31 Jan (ITAR-TASS) — The prospects of prosperity for both Russian and American people were improved as a result of our work, which was conducted in a calm and businesslike atmosphere. This is how U.S. Vice President Albert Gore summed up the results of the 6th session of the Russian-American intergovernmental commission on economic and technological cooperation.

Speaking at a news conference on 30 January, he said that together with Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin they briefed Bill Clinton on the results of their meeting. Gore said the U.S. President made it clear to them that the United States will continue to support the reforms in Russia and to closely cooperate with the aim of promoting the mutual interests of the two countries.

The Vice President mentioned the agreements reached during the talks, stressing that the principal objective of the meeting was to help to create a healthy and open climate for trade and investment in Russia. He talked about the successful implementation of the program on dismantling the nuclear weapons of the former USSR. He noted that the forthcoming meeting in Moscow of the heads of the eight most industrially developed countries of the world, scheduled in April this year, will provide the opportunity to coordinate the efforts in the sphere of nuclear safety. The Vice President also talked about joint projects in the spheres of ecology, space research and others.

In his statement, Viktor Chernomyrdin said the practical results of the commission's work show that our cooperation is on a right path. He said that during the six sessions held so far within the past few years nearly 120 agreements, statements, contracts, and other documents were prepared. As always, the problems of security and disarmament took a prominent place in its work this time.

The Russian prime minister noted the effect which internal political context — both in Russia and America — had on the commission's work due to the fact that this year presidential elections will be held in both countries. "During the commission's work as well as in our conversations with President Clinton and Vice President Albert Gore, I repeatedly stressed that Russia's progress on the path of the reforms has not been halting or deviating from the course laid out in the past four years. President Yeltsin, as a guarantor of the continuation of the reforms, and his government do their utmost to ensure this," Chernomyrdin said.

Chernomyrdin Says Commission With U.S. Working Well

LD3101111496 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 0600 GMT 31 Jan 96

[From the "Novosti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Announcer Igor Gmyza] Viktor Chernomyrdin's three-day visit to the United States is drawing to an end. The Russian prime minister's task had not been easy: He had to convince the Americans — worried by the results of our parliamentary elections and government reshuffle — that the policy of continuing democratic reforms remained unchanged. If one is to judge by the results of the meetings and talks held, the Russian prime minister had some success.

[Correspondent Sergey Goryachev] [video shows Chernomyrdin visiting Clinton, archive of cosmonauts, Gore-Chernomyrdin news conference, Chernomyrdin's aircraft] Viktor Chernomyrdin's meeting with the U.S. President seems to have demonstrated a change in America's interpretation of events in Russia. Only a few days ago voices loudly expressing concern could be heard in America: Did Moscow intend to continue its reforms and, accordingly, should it receive the loan? In response to a question from Russian Public TV, Clinton said: The loan should be granted. I give it my full support. The political decision itself won support during the past few days: The work of the Gore-Chernomyrdin commission and its result — 25 agreements and seven joint statements. The Russian prime minister and the U.S. Vice President signed an agreement on increasing Russia's access to the world market in commercial satellite launches. Now we can execute and profit from 20 such launches during the next four years. With the Mir shuttle program, the United States has consented to our station remaining in orbit and working with shuttles for another three years. Furthermore, the first crew of the international Alpha station has been announced in Washington. Sergey Krikalev and the American William Shepherd will fly to the station from Baykonur in May 1998 while on Earth the Americans will invest money in the Russian forestry industry. They will cooperate with us in the fight against crime in the commercial sphere. Doctors from both countries will work together to eradicate diphtheria. Vice President Gore announced that scientists from the United States and Russia would start joint oceanic research in the summer. The possibilities for partnership, he said, are endless.

Chernomyrdin recalled that Russia's goods turnover with the United States now grows annually by 20 to 25 percent.

[Begin Chernomyrdin recording] We have practically obtained the results that we wanted, which we were working on. In general I should say that the work of the commission that we have been conducting now for several years is on good form. It suits us very well and we are now applying this form of work to other countries. [end recording]

[Goryachev] Before leaving for Moscow, Chernomyrdin has a stop-over in New York where he will visit the New York stock market and then meet local businessmen.

Clinton, Chernomyrdin Meet Before Signing Ceremony

LD3001220396 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 2100 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and U.S. President Bill Clinton have had a meeting in Washington. Before meeting Chernomyrdin, Clinton stated to journalists that reforms are progressing in Russia. Having noted that signs of economic growth can be observed in Russia, he expressed the hope that it would get the support of the International Monetary Fund and other countries if it stays on this course.

After the meeting there was the ceremonial signing of the documents drawn up within the framework of the work of the Russian-U.S. commission for economic and technological cooperation. Earlier on Tuesday, Viktor Chernomyrdin took part in the sitting of the Russian-US oil club.

Russian-U.S. Documents Signed in Washington

LD3001214596 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 2040 GMT 30 Jan 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondents Gennadiy Yezhov and Ivan Lebedev]

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington, 30 Jan (ITAR-TASS) — A number of important agreements on interaction between Russia and the United States in various spheres were reached during the sixth session of the Russian-U.S. Commission on Economic and Technological Cooperation. It is being held in Washington under the chairmanship of Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and U.S. Vice President Albert Gore. At a ceremony chaired by Gore, which was held in the U.S. State Department building today, the sides signed documents on cooperation in the spheres of space research, small business development, conversion of defense enterprises, health, and crime prevention.

Yuriy Koptev, general director of the Russian Space Agency (RKA), and NASA head Daniel Goldin put their signatures under an executive agreement on monitoring the radiation levels in space during the flight of the Russian space ship 'Mars'. As Koptev told an ITAR-TASS correspondent, this spacecraft will be launched toward the 'red planet' in October 1996.

A representative of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations and Ronald Brown, the U.S. secretary for commerce, signed a Statement of Intent on cooperation in the sphere of combating crime in the commercial sphere and a Joint Statement on setting up, within the framework of the Committee for the Development of Business Cooperation, a subcommittee for cooperation in the sphere of supporting small businesses.

Another important document that was signed today in the State Department building was the Memorandum on cooperation in attracting funds from the American state Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC). What is in question here is support for conversion projects in Russia totaling up to $500 million.

Miron Tatsyun, chairman of the Russian state timber industry company Roslesprom, told the ITAR-TASS correspondent that the document that he and a representative of the U.S. Export-Import Bank had signed, a Memorandum on mutual understanding on support for projects in the Russian timber industry, defines the conditions on which that U.S. state financial institution will be able to provide guarantees for commercial credits to the Russian Federation. The Russian side plans, before the next session of the Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission which is pencilled in for July 1996 in Moscow, to present the bases for several specific projects in the sphere of the timber industry that could be implemented with the support of the United States.

A memorandum on technical cooperation and exchange of information on the safety, quality control, and the labelling of food products with the view of improving public health and encouraging trade was also signed, as well as a joint statement on cooperation in supplies of medical equipment and a supplement to the December 1994 memorandum on mutual understanding in the sphere of medical drugs.

At one of the Commission's sittings earlier on, the sides put their signatures under a memorandum regarding the final report on a joint dialogue on the questions of taxation of commercial enterprises and a financial protocol on the questions of conversion.

Several more important documents regarding the Russian-U.S. cooperation in the spheres of ecology and space research are expected to be signed as a result of the sixth session of the Commission. Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and U.S. Vice President Albert Gore will put their signatures under these documents.

Chernomyrdin's TODAY Interview Reprinted

MM3001171196 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 31 Jan 96 pp 1, 7

["Abridged version" of TODAY newspaper's [as received] interview with Russian Premier Chernomyrdin, received via RIA NOVOSTI; date and place not given: "Viktor Chernomyrdin: We Will Do Everything To See B. Yeltsin Wins If He Runs in the Coming Election, Russian Prime Minister States in Response to Questions From U.S. Newspaper TODAY"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [TODAY] Secretary of State Warren Christopher has called on Moscow to find a political solution to the Chechnya crisis. Will Russia return to the negotiating table? What sort of peaceful solution might there be to this problem? How has the Chechnya crisis affected the policy being implemented in respect of the Russian minorities in the provinces?

[Chernomyrdin] No state — and Russia is no exception — can remain aloof from everything that affects the maintenance of the state's integrity, the rule of law, public order, and its citizens' security. This needs to be recalled in connection with the events in the Chechen Republic, which, in accordance with the Russian Federation Constitution, is an inalienable part of the Russian state.

On 17 December 1995 elections for legitimate organs of power were held in the Chechen Republic. All political forces, including Dudayev himself and his supporters, were able to take part in them.

Legitimate organs of power which enjoy the support of a considerable proportion of the population are currently operating in the republic.

I would like to reemphasize that the federal authorities have never abandoned the political dialogue. But such a dialogue can only be successful if the illegal armed formations disarm completely. And when it comes to organized terrorism we will act in full accordance with the generally accepted norms of international law. We resolutely reject any attempts (from whatever quarter) to make out that Dudayev's armed terrorism is some kind of struggle for the Chechen people's national self-determination.

We have no quarrel with the Chechen people, and the Chechen Republic — like the other "Russian minorities in the provinces," as you called them — enjoys in full measure and without any exceptions all the rights granted to Russian Federation components by the Constitution.

[TODAY] In his recent speech at Harvard University, Secretary of State Warren Christopher stated that the reforms in Russia are "in question" and that a failure to continue the reforms could place Russian cooperation with the West in jeopardy. What is your view of this statement?

[Chernomyrdin] I can state without any exaggeration that nobody questions the need for reform in Russia. How to implement that reform is another matter. There are different opinions on this score. And that should not worry anyone — it is normal. The past five years of reform have laid the foundations for economic growth. It would be suicidal for Russia to destroy everything that has been accomplished and start everything from scratch. So it seems to me that, both now and in the future, any government will have to see its task as being primarily to continue the reforms and to create the necessary conditions for the development of initiative and business, and for boosting the people's prosperity.

What is the main obstacle to economic reform? Probably the following. Our reforms have been proceeding so rapidly and radically that people have been unable to keep up with what is happening. Hence the difficulties in adapting to the new realities of life. Perhaps this is the reason why there are so many political disputes about the direction and results of the reforms.

Today only those who cannot be bothered are failing to criticize the government for its anti-inflationary policy. Being tough is both difficult and very unpopular — particularly in presidential election year. But there is no other option, there is no other alternative. The authorities' responsibility is to be able to teach people and, if necessary, to force people to live within their means so as to ensure that it is real incomes, rather than just the number of bank notes, that increase. And I am confident that ultimately this is the most effective economic policy. Without it, all the talk of stabilizing — much less raising — living standards is just pie in the sky.

So it is no accident that we will be making it our main task to implement the kind of policy that will allow us to make 1996 the first year to see the beginnings of economic growth.

[TODAY] How can the United States assist Russia?

[Chernomyrdin] Primarily by opening up Western markets to Russian goods.

The preservation of a large number of protectionist barriers by the West is due to the fact that Russia is still seen as a country with a centralized economy. None of the Western countries have taken on board Russia's new legal status as a country with a market economy — or, at the very least, an economy in transition to the market.

As for U.S. aid to Russia, I would frame the question differently — a business partnership between Russia and the United States. We have an interest in ensuring that it works to deepen and develop reform in Russia. I am convinced that this is also in line with U.S. national interests.

[TODAY] Members of the Russian parliament have called for the economic reintegration of the CIS. What do you think about this? How would Russia stand to benefit? What would the participants in any agreement gain as a result?

[Chernomyrdin] Literally the other day a meeting of the CIS heads of state was held in Moscow. The results allow us to conclude that there is a steady trend toward voluntary integration on the part of the member countries. We want to create a single market and a single area for the free movement of capital, labor, goods, and services on the territory of the former Soviet Union.

This is in line with the vital interests of all the CIS countries (in no way infringing their sovereign rights) and is fully in line with Russian interests.

[TODAY] If Russian Federation President B. Yeltsin decides to run, what role will you have in his government? Will you remain prime minister?

[Chernomyrdin] President Yeltsin has said that he will announce his decision in mid-February; what we do then depends on that [v sootvetstvii s etim my budem deystvovat dalshe].

[TODAY] If B. Yeltsin loses, what will be the consequences for the Russian people and for Russia's international relations?

[Chernomyrdin] In the event of President Yeltsin's deciding to run for a second term we will do everything to see that he wins the presidential election.

Russia, U.S. To Exchange Spy Satellite Photographs

LD3001201096 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 1800 GMT 30 Jan 96

[Video report from Washington by correspondent Sergey Goryachev, including recorded comments by Russian Environment Minister Viktor Danilov-Danilyan and Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin; from the "Vremya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Goryachev] Viktor Chernomyrdin and Bill Clinton will be having a meeting in the White house in about an hour's time. We do not expect statements of any special importance as a result of it. This is more like a sign of respect toward the Russian guest. As for signing the Russian-U.S. documents, some details came to our knowledge.

From the Russian delegation we learned that Viktor Chernomyrdin and U.S. Vice President Gore are to sign a statement on the fulfillment of the ecological initiative later today. This rather unassuming title covers something very interesting — the first exchange of information received from the Russian and U.S. spy satellites.

[Danilov-Danilyan] There are both practical and political aspects to this.

[Goryachev] Viktor Danilov-Danilyan showed us an area of the Eglin air base. It was under observation since 1979. And now it turns out that the decoded information provided by our space intelligence provides invaluable data for studying the process of soil erosion, deforestation, and all other phenomena caused by the daily military aircraft flights over the area. Russia, in its turn will receive the American photographs — of a military unit near Yeysk [Rostov Region].

[Danilov-Danilyan] The area around the Yeysk base is interesting, because biologically it is one of the most productive regions of the Russian Federation. The area lies near the Sea of Azov in Rostov Region. This area is under very intensive cultivation and has the highest yields. The density of population is extremely high.

[Goryachev] The principle of mutual benefit is also embedded in the proposed agreement on the sale of American medicines to Russia. Negotiations are under way on further development of the joint exploration of oil deposits.

[Chernomyrdin] First of all, this will mean more jobs, quite a few jobs for us. And I think this will help to solve social problems of those who will get those jobs. On the whole, the questions that we are discussing and decisions that are being adopted are, of course, very important to Russia.

[Goryachev] Politics play an important part at the Washington talks. today, Viktor Chernomyrdin met Newt Gingrich — the Republican Congress speaker who openly criticizes Clinton's policy on Russia. Nevertheless, there is nothing untoward about these contacts with the American opposition. U.S. presidential elections are in November. [video shows Chernomyrdin meeting Gore and Gingrich, Russian maps, and aircraft pictures]

Russia: Gingrich Cited on Chernomyrdin Factor

LD3001195696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1857 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] WASHINGTON, D.C., Jan 30 (INTERFAX) -- U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Newt Gingrich described Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin as a "powerful stabilizing factor" in Russia's market reforms on Tuesday.

Meeting the visiting Russian prime minister in Washington, Gingrich said the United States wished to steadily develop its relations with Russia, an INTERFAX correspondent reported from the U.S. capital.

Chernomyrdin, for his part, said "good, businesslike relations" had taken shape between the two countries, "which are having a positive influence on internal political processes both in Russia and the United States." He said Russia would try "to do its best to develop and strengthen these relations."

Asked about the $9 billion loan Moscow is trying to obtain from the International Monetary Fund on the basis of so-called special drawing rights, the prime minister said there were no reasons to dramatize the situation. He said Moscow and the IMF had not yet started official talks. "At present, discussions are taking place within working groups," he said.

The sixth session of the so-called Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission, a U.S.-Russian commission on economic and technological cooperation co-chaired by Chernomyrdin and U.S. Vice President Al Gore, due to finish on Tuesday, is expected to result in the signing of about 15 documents. Among them are a joint statement on a Russian-American environmental initiative, a 1996 Mir-Shuttle space program, statements on funding a Russian project to develop a new aircraft, the Ilyushin-96 MT, and on mutual access to each other's markets.

Other documents to be signed are a memorandum on a dialog on taxation of business, declarations of the two countries' intent to cooperate in fighting crime in business and of support for small-scale business, an accord to monitor radiation levels in outer space during a flight by the Russian spacecraft Mars, and some documents on nuclear security.

But no agreements are due to be signed on a joint project to develop the Timan Pechora oil and gas province in northern Russia, a senior source in the Russian delegation told INTERFAX. The project, into which an estimated $25 billion is to be invested, is due to be discussed during the commission's seventh session, tentatively scheduled to be held in Moscow in July.

Russia: Davydov Calls on U.S. To Lift Restrictions

LD3001195396 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1857 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 30 (INTERFAX) — The deputy Russian prime minister, Minister for Foreign Economic Relations Oleg Davydov, asked the U.S. administration to lift restrictions on trade and economic relations with Russia. On Tuesday he addressed the plenary meeting of the Gore-Chernomyrdin commission in Washington, said a ministry's spokesman.

Davydov favored giving to Russia the status of a country with a transitional economy. He said that this status had been officially recognized in the joint statement by the presidents Boris Yeltsin and Bill Clinton. The statement was called Partnership for Economic Progress and signed in September 1994.

However, according to Davydov, "this new quality has not been reflected in U.S. legislation."

"Russia is still treated as a country 'with a non-market economy' in U.S. legislation," said Davydov.

"This conditions the unjustifiably tough and unfavorable procedure of setting customs duties of greater than 100 percent for Russian goods in some cases, including for uranium and ferro-vanadium," he said.

He also said that as compared to other countries, Russia enjoys the worst access to the system of U.S. state purchases.

Davydov expressed regret that in the new rules for control over U.S. export of super-computers, "Russia appeared again in one of the worst categories."

"In relations with Russia the Jackson-Vanick amendment is still in force. It demands annual prolongation of the most-favored nation treatment," said Davydov.

He believes that the removal of these and other obstacles in the trade between Russia and the United States would be advantageous for both countries."

At the same time, Davydov was satisfied to note that the trade turnover between Moscow and Washington is growing faster that the volume of Russia's foreign trade as a whole. By the Ministry's preliminary estimates, the volume of Russian-U.S. trade in 1995 grew by 25 percent against 1994 and reached $7 billion.

"If this tendency continues," said Davydov, the United States will soon become Russia's main trade partner, leaving behind Ukraine and the Federal Germany."

Russia, U.S. Nuclear Security Agreements Detailed

LD3101113796 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0850 GMT 31 Jan 96

[By unidentified ITAR-TASS special correspondent]

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington, 31 Jan (ITAR-TASS) — Nuclear security centers are being set up in Moscow and Washington at which information about all atomic stations in Russia and the United States will be held. This is stated in a series of documents on nuclear security and the civilian use of atomic power signed by representatives of the Russian Federation and the United States during the sixth session of the American-Russian commission on economic and technological cooperation, which ended here on Tuesday [30 January].

Existing accords between the two countries in this sphere were supplemented by a joint statement relating to common principles of cooperation in the field of nuclear security; an accord on the creation of a joint consortium for alternative sources of energy, and a joint protocol on expanding cooperation on the problem of nuclear materials used in atomic power engineering, medicine, technology, and research reactors.

Viktor Mikhaylov, the Russian minister for atomic energy, said in a conversation with an ITAR-TASS correspondent that in addition to these documents, a report on a system of security during the storage, transportation, and dismantling of nuclear weapons was also signed with the U.S. Defense Department. This is a kind of account of joint work on the construction at Russia's Mayak production association in the Urals of a storage facility for weapons-grade plutonium obtained through the dismantling of nuclear weapons in the Russian Federation. The minister said that the $300 million cost of its construction had been shared equally by the sides and that erection of the facility had already been started jointly. "This storage facility will hold up to 40 percent of our weapons-grade plutonium," said Mikhaylov. "Its construction is needed because at the moment we are unable to salvage all the plutonium we have and to use it at atomic power stations. That will probably take about 20 years." The minister stressed that it would be an ecologically clean enterprise meeting all International Atomic Energy Agency standards. The plutonium will be held there for 20-25 years and then it is planned to use the facility for storing isotopes used in medicine and various sectors of industry. A similar storage facility is to be built in the United States.

The minister also said that the issue of drawing up a new agreement between Russia and the United States on the civilian use of nuclear energy was discussed within the framework of the Gore-Chernomyrdin commission.

Russian Minister Denies Allegations of Uranium Deliveries to U.S.

LD3101094196 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0849 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] WASHINGTON, January 31 (ITAR-TASS) — Russian Nuclear Minister Viktor Mikhaylov has denied allegations on Tuesday spread by the mass media that Russia violated the terms of the agreement on deliveries to the United States of low-grade uranium obtained as a result of dismantling nuclear installations.

"These reports absolutely do not conform to reality," Mikhaylov told ITAR-TASS." We obtain high-grade uranium when dismantling nuclear weapons, then process it into a low-grade uranium for subsequent deliveries abroad," Mikhaylov said.

"Unfortunately, the U.S. side has not yet fully resolved the problem of the transparency of these processes. We have been conducting them at two plants — the "Tomsk-7 and "Sverdlovsk-44." U.S. experts have been to these plants and watched the process, but they would like to make a more thorough analysis," Mikhaylov said.

"In turn, we have declared that it was necessary to check that the uranium delivered from Russia to the U.S. is not enriched anew and turned into a weapons-grade uranium. However, U.S. companies making fuel for nuclear power stations out of Russian low-grade uranium seem reluctant to see Russian experts at their enterprises," Mikhaylov said. He expressed the confidence that these problems would be settled during further consultations.

Mikhaylov said that the Russo-U.S. Commission for economic and technological cooperation which ended its session on Tuesday managed to settle the problem of the payment for the deliveries of Russian low-grade uranium in 1996. Further uranium deliveries to the U.S. will be discussed by representatives of the Russian Nuclear Ministry and the U.S. Energy Ministry, Mikhaylov said.

At the same time, the Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission failed to fully remove artificial restrictions on deliveries of the Russian uranium to the United States. "We obtain this substance as a result of an industrial process with the use of high tech and therefore, any reference made by the U.S. side to anti-dumping legislature is groundless," Mikhaylov said.

He stressed that in the opinion of Russian experts it is necessary to lift all restrictions on deliveries of low-grade uranium from Russia to the United States in accordance with the existing contract.

Russia Seen Financially Incapable of Implementing START II

LD3001195496 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1857 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 30 (INTERFAX) — Russia is financially incapable of fully implementing the START-II treaty, a conference on the treaty's ratification in the State Duma concluded Tuesday. The treaty was signed in Moscow on January 3, 1993.

The conference was attended by Duma deputies, officials from interested ministries and bodies and independent experts, according to a press release published by the Duma geopolitics committee.

Speakers at the conference stressed the need to reduce both Russian and U.S. strategic arms and established that qualitative changes had happened in the external political situation around Russia.

"The United States has abandoned deterrent tactics for a global defense system against nuclear strikes using strategic arms and anti-missile defense systems," they underlined.

At the same time, Russia still does not have a national security concept, while its armed forces and defense complex are facing "a most difficult situation," the conference agreed.

The experts stated that the treaty had been signed without sufficient preliminary expertise and evaluation.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin submitted the treaty for ratification by the State Duma on June 20, 1995. The U.S. senate ratified the treaty on January 26, 1996.

Russia: Benefits of START II Ratification Examined

LD3001184096 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English
1744 GMT 30 Jan 96

[By Boris Kipkeyev]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, January 30 (ITAR-TASS) — Russia would benefit from the ratification of the strategic arms reduction treaty (START-2), especially quantitative aspects of it, the commander of Russian missile forces, Colonel-General Igor Sergeyev, told reporters on Tuesday.

Under START-2, Russia and the U.S. are to cut their nuclear arsenals almost threefold, to 3,500 warheads, by 2003, Sergeyev said.

Russia commits itself to scrap its missiles with dispensing warheads, in exchange for the U.S. cutbacks in sea and ground-launched warheads and limited deployment of the far-range aviation.

The treaty, in particular, envisages the scrapping of the U.S. MX missiles, four nuclear-propelled missile carrying ships Trident and 30 B-52 bombers.

Asked about the current status of Russia's "nuclear shield," Sergeyev said the combat readiness of Russian missile forces is "as high as 10-15 years ago."

Russia To Give Bulgaria Tanks, Armored Vehicles

LD3001175396 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1628 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 30 (INTERFAX) — Russian this February will hand over to Bulgaria's armed forces 100 T-72 tanks and 100 armored vehicles, chief of the international military cooperation of the Russian armed forces general staff, Col. Gen. Dmitriy Kharchenko told INTERFAX on Tuesday.

According to him, Moscow will hand over the fighting vehicles for free. "Sofia will only pay transportation charges," said the general.

The Russian vehicles to be handed over to Bulgaria were to be destroyed in line with the treaty on the Reduction of Conventional Forces in Europe, Kharchenko said.

In line with the agreements, Bulgaria will destroy the same number of outdated military technology — 100 tanks and 100 armored vehicles, said the general.

According to him, the Russian president has approved the transfer of Russian vehicles to Bulgaria.

Kharchenko said that the transfer of Russian technology to Bulgaria is profitable for Moscow because otherwise it would have had to destroy these tanks and APCs itself.

"This decision could also be considered as a gesture of goodwill towards Russia's long-standing partner," said Kharchenko.

He also said that Bulgaria is one of the East European countries which does not seek NATO membership.

Yeltsin Appoints New Ambassador to Yugoslavia

LD3001130196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1131 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 30 (INTERFAX) — Yuriy Kotov was appointed the Russian ambassador to the Union Republic of Yugoslavia by a Monday decree of President Boris Yeltsin which simultaneously dismissed Gennadiy Shikin. This was reported to INTERFAX by the presidential administration.

Russia: General on Transport of Brigade, Equipment to Bosnia

LD3101115096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1011 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 31 (INTERFAX) — Transportation of a Russian airborne brigade to the Balkans will be completed by Wednesday night. The brigade will participate in a multi-national operation to ensure fulfillment of Bosnian peace agreements, commander of the Russian Air Borne Troops Col. Gen. Yevgeniy Podkolzin told INTERFAX.

The last military-cargo planes carrying personnel and materiel of the brigade have left a military airfield in Ivanovo today, said the general. "The first plane took off at 11 a.m., the other three are departing for Tuzla every hour," he added.

All 11 Russian trains carrying machinery and servicemen have arrived in Bosnia. It took 76 flights to transport the brigade there.

Tonight the general is expected to report to the Defense Ministry on the completed transportation of the 1,500-strong Russian brigade to the Balkans.

The Russian paratroopers are armed with 62 paratrooper combat vehicles, 28 armored personnel vehicles, 4 BTR-3D armored vehicles, 8 NONA self-propelled artillery launchers, 16 portable air defence launchers and 310 vehicles.

The Russian contingent will be stationed in the eastern part of the Posavina corridor in Bosnia, controlled by the Serbs.

The Air Borne Troops commander will leave for their location on February 2.

Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev will also visit Bosnia in the first ten days of February.

Yeltsin Rules Out Russian Involvement in Tajik Clashes

LD3101092696 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0856 GMT 31 Jan 96

[By Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW January 31 (ITAR-TASS) — President Boris Yeltsin categorically rules out the participation of Russian troops in combat activities in Tajikistan, his spokesman Sergey Medvedev told journalists on Wednesday.

He said the head of state "categorically rejects insinuations on the subject".

Several foreign media qualified the recent trip of the so-called Russian "Power" ministers to Tajikistan as "preparations for a large-scale participation" of the Russian army on the side of government troops against opposition militants.

In Dushanbe the Tajik Defence ministry said the armed units of Tajik opposition under the command of chieftain Mirzo Ziyeyev launched a large-scale combat operation on Wednesday morning against the government forces in Tavildara region at the feet of the Pamir mountains.

There were killed and wounded among the government troops, a spokesman of the Tajik Defence ministry told TASS.

The spokesman said the command of the Defence ministry qualified the activities of the opposition as "a rude violation of the inter- Tajik agreements on the temporary ceasefire on the Tajik-Afghan border and in the country".

The command informed the mission of OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] military observers in Tajikistan about the actions of the opposition militants.

Further on Russian Non-Involvement in Tajik Clashes

LD3101110996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0940 GMT 31 Jan 96

[By Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW January 31 (ITAR-TASS) — President Boris Yeltsin resolutely ruled out the participation of Russian troops in combat activities in Tajikistan and said Russian forces would only guard the assigned objects and protect the border with Afghanistan, according to his spokesman Sergey Medvedev.

He told journalists on Wednesday that the head of state "categorically rejects insinuations on the subject" of the Russian involvement in fighting with the Tajik opposition.

"Boris Yeltsin stresses that Russian soldiers will participate only in guarding the military and other objects in Tajikistan which they are responsible for. They will continue to participate jointly with servicemen of other CIS countries in the protection of the borders of Tajikistan", Medvedev said.

Yeltsin, who is also the current chairman of the Council of CIS heads of state, "states that the CIS peace-keeping forces will not participate in combat operations as it does not correspond to their status". Besides, "this is prohibited by the CIS charter", the spokesman said.

He added that the Russian leader "receives all the information on the situation in Tajikistan and is very concerned over the developments there".

On Wednesday morning armed units of Tajik opposition under the command of chieftain Mirzo Ziyeyev launched a large-scale combat operation against the government forces in Tavildara region at the feet of the Pamir mountains.

There were killed and wounded among the government troops, a spokesman of the Tajik Defence ministry told TASS.

The spokesman said the command of the Defence ministry qualified the activities of the opposition as "a rude violation of the inter-Tajik agreements on the temporary ceasefire on the Tajik-Afghan border and in the country".

The command informed the mission of OSCE military observers in Tajikistan about the actions of the opposition militants.

Moscow, Seoul Plan To Improve Bilateral Legal Basis

LD3001193696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1732 GMT 30 Jan 96

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 30 (INTERFAX) — Russia and South Korea plan to improve the bilateral treaty governing legal relations between the two countries, according to consultations between director of the Russian Foreign Ministry Asia Department Yevgeniy Afanasyev and Director of the Korean Foreign Ministry European Department Cho Chkhan Boma [name as received], Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Grigoriy Karasin told a briefing in Moscow Tuesday.

The officials discussed prospects of agreements on mutual trips of citizens, on juridical assistance in civil, family, and criminal cases, on currency and export control, and on protection of intellectual property.

Russia Notes 'Failed' Hawaii Talks, Offers Food Aid to DPRK

SK3001140796 Moscow Voice of Russia World Service in Korean 1200 GMT 30 Jan 96

[Talk by Station Commentator (Valeriy Surikov) from the "Today's World" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] Talks between the Japanese, ROK, and U.S. vice foreign ministers have been held in Honolulu, Hawaii. The attendants at the talks discussed how to help the DPRK overcome its grain shortage crisis.

Station Commentator (Valeriy Surikov) writes: Torrential rain was followed by flooding last summer that damaged almost (?all) of the DPRK territory. As a result, grain production was very low: The grain production was not enough to meet the minimum demand. Pyongyang even called on the world community to give food aid.

The United States, Japan, and the ROK were the first to respond to this call. Then, why did they meet again?

Some differences in views on solving this problem recently emerged between the United States, Japan, and the ROK. At the talks, the U.S. representative pointed out that the United States would provide food assistance to Pyongyang even when Pyongyang does not make an official request for food assistance.

The United States insists that the situation in the DPRK should not be clouded by food shortages. It also expresses its satisfaction over the fact that Pyongyang has consistently implemented the DPRK-U.S. agreed framework.

However, Seoul and Tokyo insist that food aid should be provided only when Pyongyang makes political concessions. Japan even once stated it had no surplus food. I cannot but feel sorry at the fact that Japan, our neighbor, has expressed this position.

Regrettably, the Honolulu talks failed to agree on a solution. The sides insisted on their own views. However, it is too early to think that there is no hope. Pyongyang has been receiving food assistance from the ROK and various other countries through the International Committee of the Red Cross.

China will reportedly provide food to the DPRK in the near future. China reaped record grain harvests last year.

Therefore, it will be able to provide 300,000 tonnes of rice to Pyongyang without any difficulty.

Russia, too, has expressed its willingness to provide assistance to the DPRK. Russian Vice Minister Aleksandr Panov has told reporters that Russia will provide grain assistance in a timely manner if necessary.

Russia: Red Cross Refutes Allegations of DPRK Military Use of Aid

SK3001141296 Moscow Voice of Russia World Service in Korean 1200 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Seoul mass media reports alleging that the DPRK is using humanitarian aid given to flood victims for military purposes are not true. (Bera Pari Seti), representative of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, said this to ITAR-TASS.

After concluding a three-month visit to the DPRK, he said that he guarantees that foreign humanitarian aid was 100-percent distributed to the needy. He said that the federation started working in the DPRK in October 1995, and received about $3 million aid in cash from the International Red Cross Society and other countries. One third of the aid was from Japan.

He said that representatives of the international federation freely traveled to local areas in the DPRK, and were posted in all distribution routes of humanitarian aid to control the distribution. When necessary, through interviews with flood victims in areas randomly selected, they were able to confirm that all aid was properly distributed.

Yeltsin, Primakov Send Congratulations to New Greek Leaders

LD3001193196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1732 GMT 30 Jan 96

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 30 (INTERFAX) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov have sent telegrams of congratulation to Athens, "in accordance with the existing protocol practice and friendly relations between Russia and Greece."

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Grigoriy Karasin told a briefing in Moscow Tuesday that Yeltsin congratulated Konstantinos Simitis upon his election as Greek prime minister. In particular, the Russian president expressed the confidence that "the traditional relations of friendship, mutual understanding and close cooperation between Russia and Greece will continue to develop to the benefit of our peoples and in the interests of strengthening the common European and regional security and the international peace."

According to Karasin, Yeltsin also sent a friendly telegram to Andreas Papandreou who had resigned as Greek prime minister because of a serious illness.

"The Russian president expressed gratitude to Papandreou as a long-time friend of the Russian people and a prominent politician who made a large contribution to the development of Russian-Greek relations, to the strengthening of peace, security and cooperation in Europe," said Karasin.

He also said that Primakov, for his part, sent a telegram of congratulation to the new Greek foreign minister, Theodhoros Pangalos, and expressed the confidence that the Foreign Ministries of Russia and Greece will continue close coperation on the basis of the close or similar positions of the two countries on a broad range of international issues.

According to Primakov, such cooperation "would be in the interests of further strengthening of traditional relations of friendship, mutual understanding and cooperation between our countries and peoples."

Moscow Voices Concern Over Friction Between Greece, Turkey

LD3001175096 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1646 GMT 30 Jan 96

[By Vladimir Suprun]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, January 30 (ITAR-TASS) — Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Grigoriy Karasin voiced Russia's concern over friction between Greece and Turkey, both contending for the Imia island in the Mediterranean.

"The Eastern Mediterranean is a delicate and explosive region," Karasin said.

The Russian Foreign Ministry is opposed to the upgrading of tensions, it calls for the utmost tolerance, for settling conflicts peacefully on the basis of U.N. principles and international law in the interests of peace, security, and stability in this region, he said.

Russia: Execution Figures Concealed From Europe Council Debate

LD3001174396 Moscow Radiostantsiya Ekho Moskvy in Russian 1600 GMT 30 Jan 96

[Quotation marks denote recorded passages]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The latest sitting of the Presidential Commission for Pardons took place in

Moscow today. It was sitting for the first time since Russia to all intents and purposes became a member of the Council of Europe. It is worthy of note that almost 20 times more death sentences were carried out in our country last year than two years ago. Anatoliy Pristaykin, chairman of the Commission for Pardons, who informed our radio station of this, noted that these figures were not divulged before because our country was preparing to join the Council of Europe.

[Pristaykin] "I was phoned several times from Paris and they came here from the Council of Europe. A representative here in Moscow tried to discover the number executed. I tried to conceal this figure so that this did not influence our acceptance in any way. I am very pleased that we were accepted but I do not know what effect this will have."

[Announcer] I remind you that before voting for Russia's acceptance, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe tabled four amendments to the resolution on the acceptance. One of these stipulates that there should be a moratorium on the implementation of death sentences and the subsequent complete abolition of this penalty.

Politicians are divided on this matter. Whereas the famous human rights activist, Sergey Kovalev, is in favor of the death penalty being abolished the speaker of the new State Duma, Gennadiy Seleznev, thinks that Russia is not ready for this step. Viktor Ilyukhin, the head of the Duma Security Committee, is also sure of this.

[Ilyukhin] "Many countries have abolished the death penalty because they have enough alternative serious and harsh penalties, including primarily life imprisonment. Our legislation does not provide for such a punishment. If I were responsible for resolving the matter, I would not today embark on a measure such as the abolition of the death penalty." [passage omitted]

Russia: Spokesman Outlines Trade Agreement With EU

LD3001145996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1306 GMT 30 Jan 96

[By Irina Bolshova]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, January 30 (ITAR-TASS) — The Interim Agreement on Trade between Russia and the European Union is to enter into force on February 1.

The principal aim of the Agreement, which will remain in effect until an agreement on partnership and cooperation between Russia and the EU enters into force, is to settle matters connected with trade arrangments, the protection of rights to intellectual property, and customs procedures.

The Agreement's taking effect creates substantial advantages for Russia from the viewpoint of ensuring favourable conditions for the Russian commodities' access to such a major commodity market as European countries. They account for about 40 per cent of Russia's entire trade turnover, a spokesman at the Russian Ministry for Foreign Economic Relations told ITAR-TASS on Tuesday.

Under the Interim Agreement, Russia will gain an opportunity more effectively to uphold its interests in the event of EU anti-dumping procedures and to take protective measures.

The Agreement forbids the EU to apply quantative limitations on the import of Russian commodities, with the exception of steel and textiles, trade in which is maintained under separate agreements.

Ministry experts note that Russia retains the right to apply such measures to import from EU but under certain conditions and within certain limits. All trade conflicts between the two sides shall now be settled primarily through consultations.

The Agreement also establishes the freedom-of-transit principle, as it was defined by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). No duties may be levied on transit cargoes any longer while transit tariffs shall be based on economic criteria.

The Interim Agreement enables the European Union to hold consultations in the event of an increase in import tariffs in Russia. The Agreement also establishes national procedures to levy taxes on imported commodities — EU commodities will be subject to the same excises as the Russian ones, Ministry experts point out.

Moscow Expects $3 Billion of IMF Loan This Year

LD3001175496 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1713 GMT 30 Jan 96

[By Aleksandr Samozhnev]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, January 30 (ITAR-TASS) — The talks between the Russian Finance Ministry and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) ended on Tuesday with the adoption of documents on the IMF's loan to Russia.

The IMF may grant to Russia a total loan of 12 billion dollars under an extended financing programme, a Finance Ministry spokesman told ITAR-TASS today. Russia counts on getting a three billion dollar disbursement already this year.

Under the adopted procedure, the statement of the Russian government and of the Central Bank of Russia on their economic policy and other documents are to go for scrutiny by the IMF board of directors.

Given the documents are approved by mid-February, Russia's delegates are to have a regular meeting with the IMF for signing the loan agreement.

In addition, the IMF representatives had drafted and submitted to the board of directors a summary on Russia's economic policy in 1995.

This report recognises that in 1995 Russia's key economic parameters were consistent with the IMF's expectations, making Russia eligible for a double trench, or one billion dollars, of the standby loan, the Russian ministry said.

The talks with the IMF have been constructive, ministry officials said, but the IMF expects the Russian government to make effective moves to build-up the budget's revenues, improve the taxation system and liberalise exports.

Russian Foreign Ministry Cited on Japan's Participation in G-8

LD3001160496 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1519 GMT 30 Jan 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Denis Perkin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, January 30 (ITAR-TASS) — Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Grigoriy Karasin on Monday expressed the hope that Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto will take part in the nuclear security G-8 summit meeting in Moscow next June.

In a message of congratulations to Boris Yeltsin on the occasion of Russia's admission into the Council of Europe, Hashimoto said he would like to participate in the G-8 meeting on nuclear security in Moscow, Karasin said.

"We sincerely hope that Ryutaro Hashimoto is able to make this trip," he stressed.

Russia: French Decision To Stop Nuclear Tests Applauded

LD3001145296 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1423 GMT 30 Jan 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Denis Perkin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, January 30 (ITAR-TASS) — "We are very much satisfied with the decision of President Jacques Chirac of France to stop nuclear tests once and for all," Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Grigoriy Karasin told a briefing on Tuesday.

He said that Russia, which "consistently supports" a moratorium on nuclear weapons tests, regards this step as a major contribution to the termination of all nuclear tests.

"We believe that this decision of the French leadership is in line with the understanding, reached by the Russian and French presidents in Rambouillet, about the need for promoting the success of corresponding talks in Geneva," Karasin said.

Russia Assists Building Iran's Bushehr Nuclear Powerplant

LD3001212096 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2053 GMT 30 Jan 96

[By Veronika Romanenkova]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, January 30 (ITAR-TASS) — Russian specialists will accomplish the examination of objects on the building site of a future nuclear power station in the city of Bushehr in Iran.

So far, all works are being carried out according to the schedule, and the Iranian atomic power plant is due to begin operating approximately in five years, Aleksander Bryukhov, deputy head of the "Zarubezhatomenergostroi" association told ITAR-TASS in an interview today.

A contract between Russia and Iran on the completion of the construction of the first power unit of the nuclear power station in Bushehr was signed a year ago.

Russian specialists will accomplish the construction of the first nuclear power unit which was started by the Siemens German firm about 20 years ago.

One nuclear power reactor of the AVER-1100 type operating on light water will be constructed there. The contract is worth about 800 million U.S. dollars.

At present about 30 Russian atomic specialists are working in Bushehr but many of them already returned to Russia to render accounts of their work.

In addition, Iranian specialists are working at the construction site of the nuclear power station completing and repairing some subsidiary objects.

When the thorough examination of all objects of the atomic power plant is finished, the elaboration of a project of the station will begin which will take approximately 1.5 or 2 years.

Experts from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) visit Bushehr regularly. So far they have approved all works connected with construction of the nuclear power station and rendered all-round assistance.

Russia: Grachev's Almaty Tour, Primakov's Remarks Viewed

MM3001125996 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 30 Jan 96 p 1

[Report by Aleksandr Pelts and Anatoliy Ladin: "Foundation for the Development of Military Cooperation Laid in Almaty. But Questions of Stabilization in Central Asia Region Resolved in Dushanbe and Tashkent"]

[FBIS Translated Text] At the end of his working visit to Almaty Russian Defense Minister Army General Pavel Grachev expressed satisfaction at the results of the trip, during which more than 15 document of importance for the development of bilateral military contacts were signed.

Among other things the sides concluded an intergovernmental agreement on monitoring the quality of output for the needs of the two countries' Armed Forces and also an agreement between the defense ministries on organizing ties and mutual accounting procedures.

Several of the documents relate to joint air defense. A protocol of accord has been signed on the preparation and organization of joint alert duty within the CIS states' joint air defense system. The sides confirmed their intention to cooperate on naval matters and outlined the main areas of military-scientific and military-technical cooperation and the training of cadres for Kazakhstan in Russian military higher education establishments.

A plan for bilateral cooperation between the defense departments in 1996 has been ratified, as has an agreement on the principles of the joint safeguarding of the regional security of the CIS states party to the 15 May 1992 Collective Security Treaty.

Answering your KRASNAYA ZVEZDA correspondent's question at a news conference, Pavel Grachev expressed the hope that in the near future the State Duma will ratify the Treaty on Military Cooperation with Kazakhstan (the Kazakhstan parliament ratified this document long ago). As for the formation of the CIS collective peacekeeping forces, he said that this question has essentially still not been resolved either politically, militarily, or economically.

Pavel Grachev stated that Russia will help Kazakhstan in the formation of coastal protection forces in the Caspian. Five ships will be transferred from the Russian Navy for this purpose. Lieutenant General Alibek Kasymov, the Kazakhstan defense minister, stressed in turn that Almaty does not intend forming strike forces in the Caspian. The naval coastal protection forces are a safeguard against drugs and arms traffickers and poachers. Its tasks will include the protection of the state's biological and hydrocarbon resources and the maintenance of law and order in Kazakhstan's section of the Caspian. Russian specialists will inspect Kazakhstan's coastal infrastructure and help its development.

The ministers expressed quite specific views on partnership with NATO. Alibek Kasymov noted that during the Almaty meeting the sides discussed what he called the problems of individual programs for each state within the framework of "Partnership for Peace." Pavel Grachev reaffirmed that Russia supports partnership with NATO but said that it is dependent on the North Atlantic bloc's practical steps toward expanding its membership, especially in the European sector.

On the morning of 27 January, Army General Pavel Grachev left Almaty for a working visit to Dushanbe. While there he discussed with Tajikistan's leadership the procedure for the continued presence and operation of the collective peacekeeping forces, Russian forces above all, on the republic's territory.

The Russian Federation defense minister reaffirmed support for the Tajikistan leadership's efforts aimed at the further stabilization of the sociopolitical situation in the republic. With Tajikistan Defense Minister Sherali Khayrulloyev, Army General Pavel Grachev discussed questions pertaining to the formation of the Republic of Tajikistan Armed Forces. In conversation with Lieutenant General Viktor Zavarzin, commander of the CIS Collective Peacekeeping Forces, the Russian Federation defense minister gave a high appraisal of the peacemaking forces' contribution to the stabilization of the situation in the republic and presented commendations to a number of officers from the Collective Peacemaking Forces.

On 28 January Russian Federation Defense Minister Army General Pavel Grachev, Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov, Foreign Intelligence Service Director Vyacheslav Trubnikov, and CIS Affairs Minister Vitaliy Serov, who were in Tajikistan, arrived in Tashkent, where they met with top state officials and discussed problems connected with the settlement and stabilization of the situation in Tajikistan. The meeting was held behind closed doors. Afterwards Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov told journalists that Russia cannot accept what is happening in Tajikistan right now. "We are committed to stability in this country," he stated.

There are several aspects to stability, Primakov noted. There is that of relations between the Republic of Tajikistan's present political leadership and the opposition. At the same time there are also relations with the countries of the region. If the processes currently taking place in Tajikistan are allowed to spread beyond its borders the whole Central Asia region could be destabilized.

In addition, the Russian Federation foreign minister stressed, Russia must do everything possible to ensure the successful completion of the next round of inter-Tajik talks. On the whole, Primakov noted, Russia must do everything possible to ensure normal dialogue in the Republic of Tajikistan with all forces committed to the stabilization of the situation.

Russia: Foreign Minister: Visit to Belarus of Great Value

LD3001164696 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 1500 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Let us return to our closest neighbors, to Belarus, where our Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov is visiting today. Our correspondent Petr Mokritskiy has the details:

[Mokritskiy] Official Minsk welcomes the visit of the new Russian foreign minister, Yevgeniy Primakov. Many Belarusian politicians know his name well. Observers here point out that relations with CIS countries are a priority direction in his work, as is the need to establish reintegration processes, primarily in the economic sphere. Yevgeniy Primakov apparently has no intention of putting the implementation of his statements on the backburner. His first official visit to Minsk and an interview with both ministers at the airport are proof of this:

[Begin recording] [Primakov] I attribute great importance to this trip. Our two countries are connected by a common history and, I believe, a common destiny. That is why these links, these relations should develop with the greatest intensity, and we are satisfied with to their progress so far. This is very important in that after the demise of the Soviet Union some objective processes, integration processes must begin in the post-Soviet space. No doubt, they will not interfere in any way with the sovereignty of the republics, which is irreversible. However, we are becoming closer to one another, and this is also a natural and an objective fact.

[Mokritskiy] Vladimir Leonovich [Senko, Belarusian foreign minister,] to what extent are the possibilities of integration and cooperation between our two fraternal countries being used?

[Senko] The process of our integration is not easy at all. We have moved along this path for four years now. I am convinced however that we still have to tackle a great number of problems of purely economic integration, of strengthening political ties and links in various areas of cooperation on the whole between Belarus and Russia. [end recording]

During the talks which began at a meeting between Yevgeniy Primakov and his Belarusian counterpart, Vladimir Senko, a wide range of issues related to prospects of relations between Russia and Belarus will be discussed. The Belarusian side expects that Russia will take appropriate steps in line with Belarus's aspiration to ensure more comprehensive integration, which has been reinforced by the nationwide referendum.

At this time, [Belarusian President] Alyaksandr Lukashenka is meeting with the Russian minister at his presidential residence.

It is expected that economic problems as well as military and political aspects will be considered. Yevgeniy Primakov said, however, that he has no intention of touching on the issue of Russia's strategic weapons which are located on Belarusian territory unless the president himself opens this issue.

In a sense, Yevgeniy Primakov's visit lays the groundwork for a Russian-Belarusian summit. Informed sources indicated that the Russian foreign minister will extend an invitation to Alyaksandr Lukashenka from Boris Yeltsin to pay an official visit to Moscow.

Admiral Baltin Says Black Sea Fleet Issue in 'Deadlock'

LD3001141996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1215 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] SEVASTOPOL, Jan 30 (INTERFAX) — Commander of the Black Sea Fleet Admiral Eduard Baltin believes that the problem of Russia's Black Sea Fleet has been driven into a deadlock.

"The Black Sea Fleet, as a tactical and strategic unit, and not simply as a group of ships, cannot be based in one bay," he told INTERFAX in an exclusive interview.,

He also said that ships accounted for about 30 percent of the fleet. The rest is infrastructure, coastal defenses, air fields, communications and arms depots, he said.

Meanwhile, the Black Sea Fleet ships based in Sevastopol have neither a security system, nor enough space, nor a permanent source of electricity.

"Presently, the Black Sea Fleet depends entirely on its own sources of electricity," Baltin went on to say.

On June 9, 1995, Russian and Ukrainian defense ministers Pavel Grachev and Valeriy Shmarov signed the agreement on the 50:50 division of the Black Sea Fleet.

Under the agreement, Russia's Black Sea Fleet and Ukraine's navy must be based separately.

Baltin said, however, that Ukraine has actually renounced the agreement by stating that the Ukrainian navy will also be based in Sevastopol.

Ukraine: Black Sea Fleet Said To Be Facing Ruin

LD3001143696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1215 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] SEVASTOPOL, Jan 30 (INTERFAX) — A spokesman for the headquarters of the Black Sea Fleet, who preferred to remain anonymous, told INTERFAX the local staff has reasons to expect that the Black Sea Fleet will be ruined totally in the near future. According to him, the Ukrainian Navy has unilaterally appropriated six Black Sea Fleet ships and 96 support vessels since early 1993.

The fleet itself has lost 786 units and bases, over 8,000 railway carloads of arms and materials, and 4,400 units of automobiles and armored vehicles as a result of measures described by Russian Naval Headquarters as reforming the Black Sea Fleet, the source said.

Moreover, 73 units and bases deployed in the fleet's zone, with personnel numbering 13,000 men, 3,000 officers among them, were placed under Ukraine's jurisdiction.

In the period in question, the fleet's air force was cut considerably: a regiment of missile-carrying aircraft based in the town of Veseloye, an anti-submarine regiment based in the town of Mirny, and a reconnaissance squadron have been dissolved. Assault Regiment No. 43 was turned into an assault squadron based in Gvardeisky. As a result of all this the fleet "has been virtually deprived of its system for monitoring the situation in the air, on the surface and under water," the spokesman pointed out.

According to him, the command of the Black Sea Fleet has received directives from Russia's Main Naval Headquarters, instructing it to transfer its auxilliary ships to the Caspian Flotilla and to the Northern and Baltic Fleets. For instance, landing hovercraft, artillery-carrying boats, tugs, etc. Were ordered to be transferred to the Caspian Flotilla.

The Yelnya, the only tanker supplying the fleet's garrisons with fuel and lubricants, will be transferred to the Baltic Fleet.

According to the spokesman, the cabled directives order the transfer of ships to the Caspian Flotilla and to the Baltic and Northern Fleets before May 15.

Political Issues

Yeltsin Demands 'Negligent' Officials Pay Debts

LD3001201696 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 1800 GMT 30 Jan 96

[From the "Vremya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] By signing the power sharing treaties, the center has considerably secured itself against complaints about wage and pension arrears, which is a serious issue during a presidential campaign. Today Boris Yeltsin demanded in very tough words that negligent officials should immediately pay off debts, including the debts to teachers, who held a Russian-wide strike.

[Begin Yeltsin recording] The control directorate has been given a special instruction to supervise each decree literally point by point on a weekly basis and a report should be sent to me on the implementation of the given decree. The person who is to implement the decree will be taken to account if he or she fails to implement it. We must finally step up discipline in this respect. It concerns the non-payment of wages and pensions and other problems which government bodies should deal with, ministries and departments, the Ministry of Finances, the Central Bank. We have money and it is only poor organization that is to blame for the fact that people do not get wages for two months. [end recording]

Yeltsin Hopes for Cooperation With Parliament

LD3001183596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1707 GMT 30 Jan 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] After the power sharing treaties were signed in the Kremlin by the federal government and the Krasnodar territory and the Orenburg region, President Yeltsin granted an interview to INTERFAX correspondent Boris Grishchenko.

President Yeltsin hopes to agree with the State Duma and the Federation Council on joint productive efforts.

As he reviewed his conversation on the phone with the speaker of the lower house, Gennadiy Seleznev, which took place earlier in the day, President Yeltsin said that his "working relationship with the State Duma has just begun to take shape."

Yeltsin said Seleznev and he had agreed to meet "in two days' time to set the rules of the game."

He remarked he had no intention to criticize various parliamentary factions, or the State Duma, or the Federation Council. However, he added that "a certain degree of reciprocity was required of them, too."

Yeltsin hopes that his agreement with Seleznev would concern a mechanism to settle disputes between various branches of power. "We shall get together to discuss problems, to find compromises, and to avoid drifting apart. If we split now, that would be a blow on the Russian statehood, the interests of the Russian people and Russia's international authority. We must not let this happen," Yeltsin said. Information: Seleznev told journalists on Tuesday that his first meeting with the president would take place on Friday, February 2. No time has been set, though. The Duma speaker said that the range of issues to be discussed was not known yet, because "it will be the first meeting."

About delayed social payments President Yeltsin said: "We do have the money and it is the lack of coordination by certain structures and officials that is to blame for delays."

Yeltsin said he was devising a special mechanism of payments that would operate without flaws. He said that the mechanism would be in place already in March, but before that some preparations would have to be made and reserves built up to rule out any further delays.

Yeltsin described "greater discipline in the country and in the bodies of power" as one of the chief targets. He said that "several officials had been dismissed from presidential structures and some government ministers were punished for failing to fulfil presidential decrees."

Yeltsin said he had asked the control department to monitor the implementation of each decree on the weekly basis and to report to him regularly.

"Those responsible for abuse would be strongly punished. Discipline must be established at last," he said.

Government agencies, including the Finance Ministry and the Central Bank, would be called to account for failing to ensure the timely payment of wages, pensions or taking other social and economic measures. Information: After reviewing a report by the control department "On the effectiveness of measures carried out by the Russian government to support the regions" Yeltsin asked the Cabinet and Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin to probe by the end of next month into the competence of those officials who had failed to comply with presidential and government instructions.

Asked whether many people were inept by this standard, presidential press-secretary Sergey Medvedev said there were "quite a few of them." He also recalled that after studying the control department's report President Yeltsin said that the department itself worked poorly."

About the outlook for stabilization in the social sphere and in the economy Yeltsin said he hoped for stabilization not only in the economy, but in finances and people's incomes, too and for an industrial upturn.

Yeltsin believes that the wage debt will be eliminated by the middle of the year, which would require more money than usual. The second half of the year would be devoted to attracting investments into the industry and other spheres.

"Greater investments would reduce inflation and that would bring about stabilization," Yeltsin said.

Yeltsin: 1996 To 'Witness' Economic Stabilization

LD3001135496 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1238 GMT 30 Jan 96

[By Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, January 30 (ITAR-TASS) — "This year we shall witness stabilisation not only in the economic sphere, but also in the sphere of finances and in material wellbeing," President Yeltsin told journalists in the Kremlin today after the signing of a treaty on the division of authority between the federal centre and the Orenburg Region. In his opinion, this year "the decline of the living standards will be stopped, and industrial growth will begin."

According to President Yeltsin, "the first half of this year will be taken up by the payment of wage and other debts, in other words, by a major social assistance to the population. Naturally, more financial resources will be needed for it." Speaking about the second half of the year, Yeltsin said that "at that time the attention will be focused on investments in industry and other spheres. Their total amount will be increased, inflation will be brought down, and stabilisation will be achieved."

Yeltsin To Combat 'Wrong Shifts' in Economy

LD3001140996 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1235 GMT 30 Jan 96

[By Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, January 30 (ITAR-TASS) — President Yeltsin has decided to take urgent measures against wrong shifts in the socio-economic development of a number of regions and create an efficient mechanism for the implementation of the adopted resolutions. The decision was adopted after the president had studied a report submitted by the President's Control Department "On the efficiency of measures taken by the Russian government on state support to regions".

Speaking to Russian journalists today, presidential spokesman Sergey Medvedev said, in particular, that the report deals both with the progress of the implementation of state programmes for the development of Russian regions and other forms of rendering state support to regions, including in the agricultural and industrial fields.

Yeltsin has instructed Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin to establish whether officials who fail to ensure the implementation of the President's decrees and the government's resolutions on support to regions comply with their posts. Yeltsin specified that this assignment shall be fulfilled in February. Yeltsin believes that officials who, regardless of their posts, fail to ensure the implementation of the president's decrees and resolutions should be held responsible up to being dismissed from their posts. Medvedev said that President Yeltsin had criticised the Control Department itself, describing its work as "unsatisfactory".

Yeltsin Reorganizes Presidential Staff

MM3101113596 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 31 Jan 96 p 1

[Russian Federation President's Edict No. 117 signed by President Yeltsin in the Kremlin, Moscow, on 29 January 1996: "Questions of the Russian Federation Presidential Staff"]

[FBIS Translated Text] To implement the Russian Federation President's Edict No. 773 of 28 July 1995 "On the Russian Federation President's Staff," I decree:

1. That the Statute on the Russian Federation President's Staff according to Appendix No. 1 (Note: Appendix No. 1 is not attached) be ratified.

2. That the following be formed within the Russian Federation President's Staff:

The Russian Federation President's Main Administration for Questions of Constitutional Guarantees of Citizens' Rights using the personnel of the Russian Federation President's Staff Administration for Questions of Citizenship, the Russian Federation President's Administration for Work with Citizens' Appeals, the Russian Federation President's State Awards Service, the Secretariat of the Russian Federation President's Court of Appeal for Information Disputes, the Russian Federation President's Staff Department for Questions of Clemency, departments of the Russian Federation President's Commissions on Questions of Women, the Family, and Demography, on the Rehabilitation of the Victims of the Repression, on Prisoners of War, Internees, and MIA's, and on Russian Federation State Prizes for Literature and the Arts, which are being reorganized;

The Russian Federation President's Main Administration for Questions of the State's Domestic and Foreign Policy, using the personnel of the Russian Federation President's Finance and Budget Administration, the Russian Federation President's Staff Administration for Work with the Territories, the Russian Federation President's Staff Administration for Cooperation with Political Parties, Public Associations, Factions and Deputies of the Federal Assembly's Chambers, the Russian Federation President's Administration-Secretariat of the Russian Federation President's Foreign Policy Council, the working apparatuses of the former Coordinating Committee for Physical Culture and Sport under the Russian Federation President, and the Russian Federation President's State Heraldry Department, which are being reorganized;

The Russian Federation President's Main Administration on Questions of State Service and Cadres, using the personnel of the Russian Federation President's Staff Administration for Cadres and the Russian Federation President's Federal State Service Administration, which are being reorganized;

The Russian Federation President's Main Programs and Analysis Administration, using the personnel of the Russian Federation President's Analysis Administration, the Russian Federation President's Staff Information Administration, the Russian Federation President's Staff Presidential Programs Center, and the Russian Federation President's Staff Administration for Computerization and Document Support, which are being reorganized;

The Secretariat of the Chief of the Russian Federation President's Staff, using personnel of the Secretariat of the Chief of the Russian Federation President's Staff and his deputies, which is being reorganized;

The Russian Federation President's Staff Correspondence and Records Administration, using personnel from the Russian Federation President's Staff Administration for Computerization and Document Support, which is being reorganized;

The Russian Federation President's Staff Secret Correspondence and Records Department, using personnel from the Secret Correspondence Department of the Russian Federation President's Staff Administration for Computerization and Document Support, which is being reorganized.

3. That is it established that the Secretariat of the Chief of the Russian Federation President's Staff and the Russian Federation President's Staff Correspondence and Records Administration have the status of administrations of a main administration of the Russian Federation President and that the Secret Correspondence and Records Department of the Russian Federation President's Staff has the status of an autonomous department of the Russian Federation President's Main Administration.

That the following be renamed:

The Russian Federation President's State-Law Administration is to be called the Russian Federation President's Main State-Law Administration;

and the Russian Federation President's Control Administration is to be called the Russian Federation President's Main Control Administration.

5. That it is established that the Russian Federation President's Staff Library has the status of an administration of the Russian Federation President's Main Administration.

6. That it is established that workers of the Russian Federation President's Staff are entitled to comment in the mass media on questions of their official activity as well as on questions of the official activity of the Russian Federation President's Staff solely in the manner prescribed by the Chief of the Russian Federation President's Staff.

Comments in the mass media by staffers of the Russian Federation President's Staff must not contain information regarded as a state secret.

7. That it is established that the leadership of the Russian Federation President's Main Administration for Special Programs is exercised directly by the President of the Russian Federation. The Russian Federation President's Main Administration for Special Programs is to be considered a state organ belonging to the Russian Federation President's Staff.

The chief of the Russian Federation President's Main Administration for Special Programs shall, within one month, submit a draft statute on the Russian Federation President's Main Administration for Special Programs for approval.

8. That the organizational structure of the Russian Federation President's Staff be ratified according to Appendix No. 2 (Note: Appendix No. 2 is not attached).

9. That the Chief of the Russian Federation President's Staff shall submit for approval:

candidates for appointment as chiefs of the Russian Federation President's main administrations which are to be formed within the Russian Federation President's Staff — nominations are to be submitted within one week;

draft statutes on the Russian Federation President's main administrations — these to be submitted within one month.

10. The Chief of the Russian Federation President's Staff is to:

reorganize the subdivisions of the Russian Federation President's Staff in accordance with this edict within two months with a view to reducing the size of the Russian Federation President's Staff by 20 percent while ensuring the guarantees envisaged by Russian Federation law and the payment of compensation to workers laid off;

submit within one month a proposal on the formation of the Federal Information Center as an organization under the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation President's Staff, having examined the possibility of the reorganization for this purpose of the "Sistema" Scientific-Technical Center for Legal Information, the Russian Federation Justice Ministry's Scientific Center for Legal Information, and the Russian Federation President's Staff "Yuridicheskaya Literature" publishing house.

11. The Russian Federation President's first aide shall, within one month, submit for approval draft statutes on the Russian Federation President's Aides Service and the Russian Federation President's Office [Kantselyariya] and the Russian Federation President's Protocol Administration and on the Russian Federation President's Press Service.

12. The following are to be deemed to have lapsed:

The Russian Federation President's Edict No. 273 of 22 February 1993 "On Improving the System of Support for the Activity of the Russian Federation President" (SOBRANIYE AKTOV PREZIDENTA I PRAVITELSTVA ROSSIYSKOY FEDERATSII 1993, No. 9, p. 735) excluding paragraphs 1 and 11;

paragraph 1 of the Russian Federation President's Edict No. 929 of 16 June 1993 "On the First Deputy Chief of the Russian Federation President's Staff" (SOBRANIYE AKTOV PREZIDENTA I PRAVITELSTVA ROSSIYSKOY FEDERATSII 1993, No. 25, p. 2376).

13. This Edict enters into force on the day of its publication.

[signed] B. Yeltsin, president of the Russian Federation
[dated] Moscow, the Kremlin, 29 January 1996
Edict No. 117

Yegorov Remarks on Yeltsin's Staff Reorganization

MM3101114796 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 31 Jan 96 p 1

[Report by Pavel Anokhin: "The Russian Federation President's Staff Is To Become the Coordinator of All Organs of Power"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Boris Yeltsin has signed the edict "Questions of the Russian Federation Presidential Staff," which approves a new Staff statute, Nikolay Yegorov, chief of the Russian Federation Presidential Staff, announced in a conversation with journalists that this is linked to the fact that the current structure and statute were approved back before the adoption of the new constitution and no longer match the new political situation. The reorganization ensures the coordination of the president's functions.

In Nikolay Yegorov's words, the documents which have been signed were worked out over a protracted period and constitute a consistent step along the path of creating an effective mechanism for the functioning and interaction of organs of power. Under the new statute the Presidential Staff is to perform the role of one of the key elements in such a mechanism.

The main principle underlying the edict is that the Staff is formed not as a working apparatus but as an agglomeration of subdivisions and organs needed for the Russian Federation president to perform his constitutional duties.

The Staff's new organizational structure will consist of six main areas relating to the president's constitutional duties. The following subdivisions will be created and formed: The President's Main Administration for Questions of Constitutional Guarantees and Civil Rights [as published; note that section 2 of ref has "Questions of Constitutional Guarantees of Civil Rights"], the President's Main Administration for Questions of the State's Domestic and Foreign Policy, the President's Main Administration for Questions of State Service and Cadres, and the President's Main Programs and Analysis Administration. The State Legal Administration is being renamed the Main State Legal Administration, and the Control Administration becomes the President's Main Control Administration. The new administrations will perform a coordinating role and prepare for the president, in conjunction with appropriate federal departments, draft decisions on the said problems.

In the long term the present reorganization of the Presidential Staff will promote the strengthening of the presidential system of power.

The Presidential Staff is headed by the chief of staff, who will have one first deputy. The chiefs of the main administrations will be deputy chiefs of the Presidential Staff. In Nikolay Yegorov's words, a more stringent system of subordination is being suggested for the present Staff. Personnel reductions are also envisaged. Thus, 43 independent structures will be reduced to 19. The total number of apparatus personnel will be cut by 20 percent — approximately 500 people. The numerical strength of the reorganized head of state's Staff will total around 1,500.

The Russian Federation head of state also retains the presidential aides service; they will be directly subordinate to him, as is the security service.

In Nikolay Yegorov's words, the Information and Analysis Administration will be significantly strengthened and will work on political forecasting as a priority. Answering your ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI correspondent's question as to whether the current reorganization means a strengthening of the Staff's role in the country, Nikolay Yegorov said that that it is more or a regularization and intensification of the Russian president's monitoring functions. "It is no secret, he said, "that not all presidential edicts are well worked out or fulfilled. There must be systematic monitoring. The mechanism for the fulfillment of presidential edicts will soon be discussed, honed, and formalized in a new edict from the head of state."

As Nikolay Yegorov stressed, the new Staff will have partnership relations with the Russian Government. Although he makes no secret of the fact that a strengthening of the presidential structure is obvious in this case.

Talking about the public structures under the Staff, Nikolay Yegorov noted that the Conciliation Commission will remain, as will the Public Chamber. But he considers that it must be substantially reformed and made more representative, a more civic organ. In his words, it could perform the role of the Presidential Council. Instead of one presidential representative in the Federal Assembly there will now be two — in the State Duma and the Federation Council. The role of the president's representatives in the regions will also be increased.

Your ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI correspondent asked Nikolay Yegorov to comment on Boris Nemtsov's initiative to collect signatures in support for the withdrawal of federal troops from Chechnya. He said: "I would recommend Boris Yefimovich to study the history of the Caucasus and, Russia's policy in the Caucasus, and the geopolitics of the Caucasus and to proceed from that. Noble intentions do not always lead to paradise."

Kovalev Views Dismissal of Yeltsin's 'Reformers'

AU3101125696 Vienna Oesterreich Eins Radio Network in German 0600 GMT 31 Jan 96

[Report on interview with Sergey Kovalev, recently-retired head of President Yeltsin's human rights committee, by Brigitte Simnacher; place and date not given — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Studio announcer] Washington continues to bank on President Yeltsin, but not all of Yeltsin's fellow countrymen are doing so. One such person is the human rights man, Sergey Kovalev, who has become well-known here as a result of his sharp criticism of Russia's conduct in Chechnya. He recently resigned from his post as the chairman of Yeltsin's human rights committee. He says that the escalation of the war in Chechnya was a major reason why he did so, but not the only one. Brigitte Simnacher interviewed him.

[Simnacher] Sergey Kovalev uses harsh words against Russia's president, Boris Yeltsin, whom he served for six years, even if he sometimes did so at a critical distance. Kovalev describes the power structures in the Kremlin in no uncertain terms. The democrats there have no influence on Yeltsin any more, even if Yeltsin does keep underlining democratic values and principles.

[Kovalev] If you take a look at the president's apparatus, you will see that it consists of nothing but people interested in preserving their power and privileges, and dachas are only the first of these privileges. Yet at the beginning, Yeltsin was intent on eliminating these negative circumstances.

[Simnacher] This, says Kovalev, is the very reason why he personally is deeply disappointed with Boris Yeltsin. Kovalev notes that the border between certain privileges of Kremlin politicians on the one hand and criminal business gains on the other is becoming increasingly blurred. He quotes as an example Aleksandr Korzhakov, Yeltsin's all-powerful chief bodyguard, who carries the rank of lieutenant-general and is a former KGB member.

[Kovalev] Why must people responsible for protecting the president involve themselves in the sale of oil licenses? Why must the president's bodyguard maintain close contacts with the great Mostbank?

[Simnacher] Over the past few weeks, several politicians who are considered to be democratic reformers have either been dismissed from the government and from Yeltsin's presidential apparatus or have resigned. But that will not lead to any major course adjustment, says Sergey Kovalev.

[Kovalev] These personnel changes have no great impact. All they mean is that the few democrats who are left are being exchanged for people who will reverse the wheel of change somewhat. This is the prelude to the president's campaign to win votes from the communist camp.

[Simnacher] Although Sergey Kovalev has quit his post as Boris Yeltsin's human rights rapporteur, he is not at all demoralized. As a State Duma deputy and representative of the "Memorial" organization founded by him and Andrey Sakharov, he will continue to monitor carefully the development of democracy and human rights in Russia. In addition, he is convinced there will be democracy in Russia. He is even sure that the the hitherto fractious democratic reformers will agree to a single candidate for the June presidential campaign, and thus become stronger.

Yeltsin's Bid To Woo Opposition Seen Doomed

MK3001142596 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 30 Jan 96 p 1

[Article by Dmitriy Volkov: "A Nonaggression Pact Against Retreating Forces"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Presidential aide Georgiy Satarov yesterday praised the wonderfully mellow relationship between his boss and the new State Duma. There are no "areas of concern" between them, nor do political navigators see any "underwater reefs preventing the establishment of an atmosphere of cooperation between both power branches." Moreover, as long as Boris Yeltsin's opponents themselves are setting their sights on the Kremlin, they want, the analyst concluded quite reasonably, the presidential elections to go ahead and pass normally. And if so, they "are ready to confront the executive branch only up to a known point." If this point is known to the executive branch but does not worry it, this could mean that the government and the president are ready to retreat up to it without confrontation. All others will no doubt be interested in knowing what kind of route this in fact is.

Over the weekend Boris Yeltsin assured the public and Bill Clinton of the irreversibility of economic reform and said that he is having "a second honeymoon" with the U.S. leader. He also advised his future electors that "the country... is developing, leaving the crisis behind," that the next task for the ruling branch will be to "bring the machine-building sector up to scratch," and that the "people have understood the meaning of reform and have joined in its implementation." Far from everyone, however, shares the economic optimism of the head of state.

Sociological surveys, for all the unreliability of their results when they seek to elicit respondents' attitude to events four-and-a-half months ahead, still point to the very low popularity of Boris Yeltsin as a possible presidential candidate in the eyes of those surveyed. According to a study by the All-Russia Central Institute for Public Opinion Research, released by the NTV television company, the president would rank fifth among the present candidates for the post of president if elections were held today. There is a more than twofold gap between him and Gennadiy Zyuganov, the survey leader. It seems there is no room for confrontation with the leader of the largest faction in the State Duma.

The president has already outlined the scope of the new priorities for the executive branch in the sphere of economic policy. Neither the continuation of a tough financial policy nor shock methods of speeding up economic restructuring, leading to mass unemployment and bankruptcies, are mentioned in the presidential highlights. Recent personnel shakeups rather point to an intention to freeze the redistribution of property; to make peace with domestic producers, restoring to the degree possible their former well-being; and to resume regular social payments from thus far unknown sources. However, a number of specialists doubt whether, with such an approach to reform, Russia has any chance of avoiding a serious budgetary crisis or of restraining inflation within relatively narrow limits. Some of them even suggest that inflation should be expected to grow substantially before the Kremlin hopes it will — not after the presidential elections, but already in the spring.

There is no reason to believe that the thus-corrected reform will create conditions for economic revival on the basis of a stable financial system. Quite the contrary, experts note that the measures that Kremlin political analysts consider inevitable will put economic recovery on hold until the next millennium. It is possible, of course, that when talking with Mr. Clinton, Mr. Yeltsin used some other meaning of the word "reform" that has more to do with U.S. interests. In any event, if opponents of the Russian leader are to be believed, the United States is not interested in seeing a competitive domestic economy formed [in Russia].

Thus, the "known limits" up to which the leftists and the "parties of inflation" can attack the Chernomyrdin Government's economic course (its November course, because in December preelectoral considerations prompted the cabinet toward inflationary actions) go far beyond its current defense positions. In this context the "nonaggression pact" which Boris Yeltsin invited future presidential candidates to conclude hardly has any future. It would be simply a sin either for Grigoriy Yavlinskiy or for Gennadiy Zyuganov not to "attack" the incumbent president, who does not keep his word when, being unable to either stabilize industry or raise money for all those in need, knocks off the ruble.

In its time the USSR concluded a nonaggression pact with Nazi Germany in the hope of thus preparing for war with it in such a way as to wage it on enemy territory. As it transpired a little later, instead of concluding pacts, the thing to do was not to change commanders in the first place. At any rate, not to put cavalrymen at the head of tank armies.

Lebed: Yeltsin's 'Nonaggression Pact' Unreal

LD3001175596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1628 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 30 (INTERFAX) — Aleksandr Lebed, the presidential candidate from the Congress of Russian Communities, believes that a "non-aggression pact" proposed by President Boris Yeltsin in the run-up to the Russian presidential elections is unreal.

Lebed told INTERFAX Tuesday that "all presidential candidates are doomed by building their election campaigns on criticizing Yeltsin."

According to Lebed, the president is directly linked to the aggravated economic and social crisis in Russia in the past four years.

He also said that Russia's defense interests will suffer if Russia ratifies the START II treaty. According to Lebed, the political situation and power balance in the world today are quite different from those at the time of the treaty's signing, which is why the ratification must be preceded by a thorough expert assessment.

Experts Predict Yeltsin Victory if He Runs

MK3001125396 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 27 Jan 96 p 2

[Report by Olga Gorshunova, Sergey Mulin: "Analysts Sum Up the Results of the Duma Elections. They Believe That Presidential Election Will Be Won by Yeltsin"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Political analysts representing various parties, who met on Thursday [25 January] at the "roundtable" in the Russian Sociopolitical Center, were invited to discuss the subject of "The Results of the 1995 State Duma Elections." Mark Urnov, head of the presidential Analytical Board, who was to open the intellectual club and whose name had already been printed on invitations, ignored the "roundtable," whereas Gorbachev Foundation expert Viktor Kuvaldin sat silent throughout the evening, only smiling meaningfully. A "brainstorming" attack on the 17 December election results, with their subsequent extrapolation to the 16 June 1996 presidential election, effectively fizzled out: No fresh ideas were voiced.

From the very first statements it became clear that politicians and experts today are concerned not so much about the parliamentary elections, which have just ended, as the upcoming presidential election. Although there was much controversy in the discussion, most speakers agreed that Boris Yeltsin will achieve yet another victory in June.

The chances of other aspirants for the position of head of state — confined to the well-known Zyuganov-Yavlinksiy-Zhinirnovskiy threesome — were assessed differently.

The overwhelming majority of analysts agreed that after their failure in the parliamentary elections and the eviction of the democratic representatives from the presidential staff and owing to continuing division within their ranks, the democrats, should they field their candidate, will necessarily suffer a defeat. The question is whether they will in fact field their candidate and who this candidate will be. It was also stated that the Yabloko leader might become one. People at the "roundtable" believe that, to all appearances, this will not happen, but Yabloko, just as other democratically-oriented parties, can be expected to cede the votes of its electorate to one of the "real" candidates. Viktor Chernomyrdin is most likely to be such — naturally, if he agrees to run.

As for other, "minor," parties, it was suggested that, although they have zero chances of ensuring a victory for their candidates, they can seriously affect the results of the June election by adding the votes of their supporters to those supporting one of the main contenders (Boris Yeltsin or Gennadiy Zyuganov). The KRO [Congress of Russian Communities], Great Power [Derzhava], Women of Russia, and others were ranked as "hopeless." They can both confirm and refute the experts' forecast about the victory by Yeltsin who, as many believe, is way ahead of his main rival, Zyuganov.

True, other opinions were also expressed. Sergey Semkin, who represented the "roundtable" hosts, citing the population's "electronic conservatism" ["elektronnyy konservatizm"], was hard put to explain why the Agrarian Party had received three times less votes than in the previous elections and could not provide an unequivocal assessment of the success by Anpilov's bloc, Communists — Working Russia — for the Soviet Union. Either it points to a growth of Communist fundamentalism or there is no difference between the CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation] and the RKRP [Russian Communist Labor Party] in the eyes of the voter. Hence a dual forecast: either a radical change of the course with a redistribution of property or a moderate, East European-style adjustment of the course with a narrow window of opportunities in the economic sphere. The choice of the path, according to Semkin, naturally, lies with the Zyuganov party.

Aleksey Kuzmin, deputy director of the Institute of Humanitarian and Political Studies, quite the contrary, assessed Anpilov's relatively low rating as a pure "protest" vote by people in despair, a windfall. The speaker described as another positive development Gaydar's and Kovalev's breakup with Yeltsin, which automatically puts an end to the attempts to impose on Yavlinskiy an alliance with Russia Is Our Home. Kuzmin regrets the fact that Yabloko cannot come to terms with the Communists, who are in a position to block any decision in the Duma although, after it gained control of the parliament lower house, the CPRF has effectively exhausted its oppositionist nature because the government's resignation does not benefit anybody but Yabloko as the sole real opposition to the ruling authority.

Mikhail Malyutin from the Expert Institute of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs was, as always, categorical and acerbic. Based on a five-element-electorate pyramid he has built with his colleagues, the analyst guaranteed that a Communist candidate with just any name will get into the second round. The second "pass" to the second round, according to Malyutin, should go either to a candidate from the "party of power," but not Yeltsin, whom the expert compared, in popularity, to the 1982-vintage Brezhnev, or to Zhirinovskiy, without, however, pronouncing his name aloud, or a "joker," who can pop up should either Yeltsin or Zhirinovskiy disappear from the arena.

Railway Staff 'Forced' To Canvass for Yeltsin

LD3101101296 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0932 GMT 31 Jan 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondents Pavel Kuznetsov and Ivan Novikov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 31 January (ITAR-TASS) — On the suggestion of the "Russia's Regions" group of deputies, the State Duma has decided today to invite first Vice-Premier Oleg Soskovets to the Chamber on 2 February to explain to the deputies why the payment of wages has been delayed in the industries of the military-industrial complex.

Railways Minister Gennadiy Fadeyev will also be invited on 2 February. Independent Deputy Viktor Kurochkin who came up with this suggestion alleges that railways staff "are forced to collect signatures, under threat of dismissal, in support of Boris Yeltsin as a presidential candidate at the upcoming election." The deputies expect that the minister will provide an explanation.

Vice-Premier Aleksandr Zaveryukha has been invited to attend a Duma session on 9 February. He will inform the deputies on the preparations for the spring field work. It was an agrarian group of deputies who requested that the vice-premier provide an account on this matter.

Pamfilova Argues for Single Russian Democratic Candidate

MK3101072496 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 30 Jan 96 p 2

[Report by Olga Gorshunova: "Republicans Agree To Unite"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The problem of a single democratic presidential candidate was discussed on Sunday [28 January] by the Coordination Council of the Republican Party. Russian Federation Deputy [as published] Ella Pamfilova said in a press conference that her negotiations with party leaders, whose names she did not reveal, showed that they "have come to realize that passing through on their own is impossible." Grigoriy Bondarev of the "Yabloko" bloc confirmed at the Coordination Council session that the "Yabloko" leader is interested in a contact with the Republican Party.

The Republicans' Coordination Council was supposed to decide on Saturday [27 January] whether they wanted to form a bloc with others so as to nominate a single democratic presidential candidate. Ella Pamfilova — who first came up with the idea to create a "broad coalition" — was trying to persuade members of the Council to support her. Pamfilova thinks that campaigning in a single front is justified in any case: "Even if we lose, there will be a strong opposition." The principal and the most difficult task today, she said, is to break up the behavior "stereotypes" of the leaders who fear to discredit themselves through contacts with one another. She took over the role of a "third party."

Who can form the alliance, you may ask? The main criteria for forming an alliance, in Pamfilova's opinion, are: "They [future allies] should not be stained with blood up to their ears, nor should they be corrupt or in the nomenklatura trap." Pamfilova does not think Valeriya Novodvorskaya and Konstantin Borovoy should be invited.

Ella Pamfilova's call to unite was taken without enthusiasm by the large audience of the Republican Party Coordination Council, which is understandable. The party is running the risk of losing independence or totally disappearing.

In the course of heated discussions it transpired that many who either doubt or disagree are perplexed at the prospect of a "single candidate." Most of those present, including the president of the party, Vladimir Lysenko, are not prepared to back any single candidate listed in the questionnaire that was circulated (Yeltsin, Svyatoslav Fedorov, Yavlinskiy, Lebed, a candidate nominated by the Republican Party of the Russian Federation). They did not thing their own candidate could win — the party "is too weak." (The Republicans came in fourth in the parliamentary elections after democratically oriented "Yabloko," "Russia's Choice," and the "Forward, Russia!" movement). Yegor Gaydar and the other "pure liberals" who have no way to win "have proven their helplessness." The leader of "Yabloko" — the only party that "can go through" — is disliked by many Republicans ever since his "divorce" from their party.

Ella Pamfilova, who proposed the idea of nominating a single candidate, did not add clarity regarding this spicy point. She was more or less definite with regard to Boris Yeltsin. Given the fact that, together with leaders of democratic orientation, she has parted company with the president once and for all, she thinks he is still an option, even if of last resort and the worst one: "He should not be driven into a corner. It is necessary to leave the tiniest possibility to campaign for him." It is possible, she said, that Yeltsin will be asked to give up the idea of reelection "so as not to make a gift to the Communists." She said that a likely candidate could be a figure "of the Gonchar or Volskiy type."

The Council made a decision to support Ella Pamfilova's call and to be ready to undertake the organization of a united congress, which is supposed to take place in Moscow on 24-25 February.

Russia: Yavlinskiy Defines Criteria for Democratic Coalition

MK3001141696 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 30 Jan 96 p 2

[Report by Gleb Cherkasov: "Grigoriy Yavlinskiy Has Been Nominated. The Search for a Single Candidate from the Democratic Forces Continues"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Delegates to the third congress of the Yabloko public association, which took place over the weekend, nominated its leader Grigoriy Yavlinskiy as presidential candidate. His candidacy was approved by 256 votes to five.

In his policy statement Mr. Yavlinskiy said that the question of electing a Russian president "is not a question of figures, but a question of choosing a type of political regime." Stressing that personnel decisions made by Boris Yeltsin recently show that he "is not going to pursue any reform in any form or on any count," the Yabloko leader declared that the "epoch of Mr. Yeltsin is over; there are all the signs of a rapid weakening and disintegration of the power establishment." According to the Yabloko leader, "the bloody military adventure in the North Caucasus suggests that there are very serious groupings integrated into the power structures which are extremely interested in seeing the conflict in Chechnya continue." Mr. Yavlinskiy did not rule out that the war in the North Caucasus can be used as grounds for imposing a state of emergency throughout the country.

Mr. Yavlinskiy was quite specific in enumerating all those with whom Yabloko will not be friendly in the presidential election campaign. The Yabloko leader stressed that the CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation] "is not, and cannot be, an ally" of his association, especially considering that "Russia has no more resources for a repeat conduct of a Communist experiment in the country." As concerns the LDPR, according to Grigoriy Yavlinskiy, "the Zhirinovskiy party is a direct product of the party of power."

Calling on all democratic and Centrist forces "for the broadest possible alliance," the Yabloko leader said that the main criterion at negotiations on creating an election coalition should be the attitude by political forces to five problems: Russia's economic situation; the "formally conducted privatization, which has not so far yielded any economic results;" the extreme unevenness in the density of the country's population; the state of Russian Federation borders and the defense capability of the military; as well as assessment of the implications of the Belovezhskaya Forest Agreements [on the dissolution of the USSR]. Mr. Yavlinskiy said that he had in his portfolio proposals about negotiations on creating a single coalition of democratic and Centrist forces "from virtually all more or less significant political movements," including Yegor Gaydar's Democratic Choice. [passage omitted]

It is hard to tell to what extent the Yabloko leader can count on the votes of supporters of Yegor Gaydar, who has already announced that his party will not field its own candidate. Mr. Gaydar himself recently favored nominating a single candidate from "moderately democratic" forces, suggesting that Viktor Chernomyrdin could become such a candidate. The probability of Grigoriy Yavlinskiy's agreeing to such an option is very slim: At the congress, Mr. Yavlinskiy warned his associates about the "danger of political shortsightedness," in particular new mistakes "which can be made if you say: The rule of Boris Nikolayevich [Yeltsin] is one thing, but Viktor Stepanovich [Chernomyrdin] is quite another." [passage omitted]

Eye Surgeon Nominated for Russian President

*LD3001203796 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1857 GMT 30 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 30 (INTERFAX) — A presidential action committee created by the Party of Workers' Self-Rule and employees of the Eye Surgery scientific-technological complex today proposed leader of the Party of Workers' Self-Rule and Director of the Eye Surgery complex Svyatoslav Fedorov as a candidate for the Russian presidency.

Eye surgeon Svyatoslav Fedorov, known worldwide, is the best nominee for the Russian presidency, Co-Chairman of the Kemerovo Region's Public Chamber Vladimir Lebedev said at a session of the presidential action committee today.

Svyatoslav Fedorov, aged 68, was elected to the State Duma from a single-mandate constituency in Russia's internal republic of Chuvashia at the 1995 parliamentary polls.

"Russian society is tired of struggle and needs a leader who would unite it," Lebedev said.

A representative of the Russian defense industry, and USSR state prize laureate, Zinoviy Persis, said on behalf of defense industry workers that "Russia does not need a president who runs the country as his bodyguard prompts." Russia "needs a doctor who would find unorthodox methods to save the country and would lift it to the heights it deserves," he said.

Thirty-five years ago Svyatoslav Fedorov performed the world's first operation for implantation of an artificial crystalline lens. His technique is now being widely used, not only by the complex he leads and its 11 affiliates in former Soviet republics, but also in Italy, Poland, Germany, Spain, the United Arab Emirates and other countries.

The Party of Workers' Self-Rule created by Fedorov stands for "securing free labor, the unity of workers with property, distribution of profit and active participation of workers in management of enterprises."

Billionaire Registers as Candidate for Russian President

MM3001163096 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 30 Jan 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Financing Own Presidential Campaign"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The electoral commission has registered yet another candidate for Russian president. He is Sergey Zyryanov, a 36-year-old multibillionaire from Krasnoyarsk. Zyryanov is known in his home town as a major benefactor. For four years he has kept 700 of the most socially unprotected pensioners alive by paying half of their bread and milk expenses. Moreover, last year he initiated and organized a sensational football tournament at the North Pole (with the involvement of KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA) and an international expedition of cosmonauts to the Evenki region (which resulted in the Russian Government setting up the "Tungusskiy" state nature reserve).

Zyryanov is also unprecedented in that, unlike all the other contenders, he plans to finance his election campaign (which he estimates will cost 6 billion rubles) entirely out of his own pocket, without taking a kopek from the state.

Groups Backing Presidential Candidates Registered

*LD3101120196 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English
1119 GMT 31 Jan 96*

[By Pavel Kuznetsov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW January 31 (ITAR-TASS) — The Russian Central Election Commission has already registered 33 groups which will collect signatures to win registration for their candidates for the post of the Russian president at the upcoming June 16 elections.

Aleksandr Ivanchenko, deputy chairman of the commission, told the State Duma on Wednesday that six groups had been registered to back President Boris Yeltsin, who is expected to announce his decision on whether to run for the second term of office in mid-February.

However, acting legislation does not allow to sum up the signatures collected by the six groups.

Only four out of the 33 groups represent political parties and movements, according to Ivanchenko.

Their candidates include hard-liner Petr Romanov from the Assembly of national-democratic and patriotic forces, nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy from the Liberal Democratic party, strong-rule advocate and General Aleksandr Lebed from the Congress of Russian Communities and nationalist Nikolay Lysenko from the National-Republican party.

Russian TsIK Official Clarifies Candidacy Rules

*LD3001175996 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1628 GMT 30 Jan 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 30 (INTERFAX) — Under the law on presidential elections in Russia, consent of a candidate for president to collection of signatures supporting him is unnecessary, a secretary of the Russian Central Electoral Commission [TsIK], Aleksandr Veshnyakov, told INTERFAX.

A letter of agreement to run for the presidency is necessary for registration with the Central Electoral Commission. The nominee's letter of agreement, lists of signatures in support of the nominee and other documents required for registration must be submitted to the Central Electoral Commission not later than at 6:00 p.m. April 16, Veshnyakov said.

Several presidential action committees which have proposed the same candidate for the presidency may separately submit the required 1 million of signatures supporting the nominee and the nominee's letter of agreement to run, Veshnyakov said. In that case, the Central Electoral Commission will certify the candidate as nominated by the action committee which will be the first to submit the lists of signatures, he said. The signatures submitted by other presidential action committees will be "taken into consideration," Veshnyakov said.

Russian Deputy Premier Kadannikov Begins Work

LD3001180396 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1628 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 30 (INTERFAX) — Vladimir Kadannikov, appointed Russian first deputy prime minister last week under a presidential decree, started work on Tuesday.

This morning he moved into the government's administrative building on Krasnaya Presnya Embankment and began work in the room that used to belong to Anatoliy Chubays, INTERFAX learnt.

Economics Minister Yevgeniy Yasin was among the first to be received by the new first deputy prime minister. During their lengthy conversation he briefed Kadannikov on the top priority tasks to be accomplished by the Economics Ministry, Yasin told INTERFAX. Yasin also briefed Kadannikov on the session held by the government's presidium on Saturday to approve a package of draft presidential decrees and government resolutions aimed at strengthening state control over the alcohol market. Yasin and Kadannikov adjusted their approaches to the ways to regulate the prices of natural monopolists, correct the present financial and budgetary situation, improve tax collection and untangle the knot of non-payments.

During their conversation Kadannikov displayed a "sober approach" to the discussion of above mentioned problems, Yasin noted. He hopes to work successfully with the new first deputy prime minister, in charge of issues connected with economic reforms.

Kadannikov's responsibilities will be defined by the end of this week, INTERFAX learnt, and subsequently it will be determined what governmental commissions he will lead. His predecessor Chubays was chairman of a number of such commissions: the Federal Commission on Securities, the Federal Energy Commission, the Commission for Financial, Monetary and Crediting Policy, the Commission for Improving the System of Payments and Settlements, and the like.

As for Kadannikov's staff, it will evidently be reduced and renovated as compared with that of Chubays, and according to reports, Kadannikov has no intention of actively engaging people from the AvtoVAZ management.

On his first day in office he received many requests to give interviews to the media. Kadannikov is not likely to speak to the press in the next few days, since he finds it necessary to get thoroughly acquainted with his new job first.

Federal Assembly

Russia: Duma Fails To Give Date for START II Ratification

LD3101104896 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1008 GMT 31 Jan 96

[By Ivan Novikov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, January 31 (ITAR-TASS) — The State Duma Council (Eds: Council is a consultative body which includes the leaders of all parliamentary groups) instructed three appropriate committees on Tuesday to study "the bill on ratification a treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States on further reduction and limitation of strategic offensive weapons" and to submit it for the consideration of the Duma (Russian parliament lower house).

This treaty (START-2) was submitted to the State Duma for ratification by President Boris Yeltsin in June 1995.

On the instruction from the Council, the committees on international relations, defence and security are to prepare their findings on ratification of the START-2 treaty. However, the Council did not specify a date for putting this item on the agenda of the current Duma session.

However, it is expected that the Duma committees will not drag their feet with examining this important Russian-American agreement, the more so, since the U.S. Congress already ratified it on January 26, 1996.

Russia: Ilyukhin on 'Difficulties' Facing START II

LD2901173796 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1720 GMT 29 Jan 96

[By Ivan Novikov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, January 29 (ITAR-TASS) — Ratification of the Russian-American START-2 Treaty by the State Duma will face certain difficulties, Chairman of the Duma Defence Committee Viktor Ilyukhin told ITAR-TASS on Monday.

It may introduce some amendments to it before ratification, he added.

Ilyukhin pointed out controversial assessments of the treaty by officials and the public. "Many Russian military experts either oppose its ratification or insist that it should be considerably amended," Ilyukhin said.

He noted that drastic changed occurred in and outside Russia after the conclusion of the treaty. NATO is getting closer to the Russian borders. Poland, the Czech Republic, the Baltic states and Moldavia have expressed their readiness to join the Alliance. Georgia's stand is controversial," he said.

"Our armed forced are undergoing reorganisation, that is why our strategic nuclear weapons are the last deterring factor in the situation Russia is currently facing," Ilyukhin said.

Besides, Russia's compliance with its obligations will incur additional expenses which the country is not ready to bear at present, he said.

Yeltsin Supporters Charged With Using Coercion in Campaign

LD3101121296 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1336 GMT 31 Jan 96

[By ITAR-TASS parliamentary correspondents Pavel Kuznetsov, Ivan Novikov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 31 Jan (ITAR-TASS) — The Central Electoral Commission [CEC] has already registered cases in which coercion was used to collect signatures in support of presidential candidates, said Aleksandr Ivanchenko, CEC deputy chairman, reporting at a State Duma plenary sitting today. He had been invited to the chamber to inform the parliamentarians about preparations for the election of the head of state.

Aleksandr Ivanchenko said that people were being threatened that their wages would be withheld if they refused to sign. He said that an especially large number of such cases has been registered in the Ministry of Transport system. "The signatures being obtained in this manner are in support of the present president, Boris Yeltsin," he said.

Aleksandr Ivanchenko said that the CEC had notified the leadership of the Ministry of Transport that such actions are intolerable. The transport minister is "a realistic candidate for discussion at a CEC sitting."

The CEC deputy head said that all facts concerning the illegal collecting of signatures are being documented in his department and if it receives such signatures, the CEC "is ready to make these facts public." He also stressed that the law "stipulates that candidates for the presidency are to be denied registration if there are violations in the course of preparing the election campaign documentation."

Russia: Soskovets Urged To Report on Presidential Campaign

LD3001164596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1458 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 30 (INTERFAX) — It is not ruled out that Russia's State Duma will insist that Russia's First Vice Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets should address the January 31 session of the chamber with the information on the headquarters on elections of the Russian president under creation now, State Duma speaker Gennadiy Seleznev said responding to INTERFAX.

Earlier the deputies invited Soskovets to the chamber's session in order to clarify why a pre-election state structure is being created in parallel with the Central Election Commission and whether the first vice prime minister may head it.

During the conversation between Seleznev and Soskovets the day before Soskovets said that there exists not a single presidential decree or government resolution on creating such headquarters and on appointing its leaders.

Thus, Soskovets believes, there is no need in his address in the State Duma.

Seleznev told INTERFAX that he expected an reasonable letter from the vice prime minister regarding this issue in order to present it to the State Duma Council. Meanwhile, "deputies should know for sure whether Soskovets is chief of the headquarters or he is not and it is difficult to make any conclusions on the basis of this letter."

Due to this information "clarifying this letter will be probably circulated in the State Duma on Wednesday or Soskovets himself will be present here," according to Seleznev.

"We shall contact Soskovets over the telephone and report what resolution the State Duma has adopted," Seleznyov added.

Russia: Soskovets Begs Off Duma Hearing on Election

MK3101100696 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 31 Jan 96 p 1

[I.R.-signed report: "Soskovets Begs Off"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Today, the State Duma planned to hear the Central Electoral Commission deputy chairman Aleksandr Ivanchenko and First Deputy Premier Oleg Soskovets on how preparations for the presidential election are going on, to what extent the creation for this purpose of a special staff by the president is legitimate, and whether one of the top government officials can head it. Mr. Ivanchenko will come for the Duma sitting, whereas Mr. Soskovets will most likely not. At the same time, the latter sent a letter to the lower house chairman, Gennadiy Seleznev. It recounts the provisions of the presidential election law which make electoral commissions responsible for holding a presidential election and make state bodies responsible for helping the commissions to exercise their powers. "It is these provisions in the law that we are guided by in the work connected with preparations for the presidential election," Oleg Soskovets pointed out. Mr. Seleznev, however, remarked for his part that even more questions crop up after receiving such a missive.

Russia: Shokhin Says Parliamentary Committees Undermanned

LD3001141696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1212 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 30 (INTERFAX) — The Russian State Duma is expected to endorse the makeup of parliamentary committees and fix their final number, reported first deputy speaker Aleksandr Shokhin. He added that six of the 28 committees approved by Duma have so far been "in a state of suspense," since in each of them the number of members has been less than the 12 required for a committee to be considered complete by the lower house's statute. Only six deputies have wished to work in the committee for tourism and sports, seven in the geopolitics committee, in the ecology and nationalities committee — eight apiece, in the conversion, science intensive technology, culture, veteran affairs, and Arctic problems committees — ten apiece.

According to Shokhin, the Duma will most likely recess for a week as of next Friday. On Wednesday, it is expected to set up a parliamentary commission on checking the results of the second stage of privatization and to pass a bill on hiking wages, pensions, and other payments as of February 1. The Duma approved the bill in the first hearing on January 19, 1996.

Russia: Duma Deputies Stack Powerful Committees, Shun Others

MK3001133496 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 30 Jan 96 p 2

[Report by Ivan Rodin: "The Deputies Are Choosing Occupations. The Budget Committee Is Overcrowded, While the Legislation Committee Is Undermanned"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Although all during the past week deputies were working in their electoral constituencies, a little scandal broke out in the Duma. Just like their colleagues from the upper house, Duma deputies did not display a particular wish to work on one of the main committees — on legislation and legal and judicial reform. Only 15 people signed up for this committee. True, the Communists sent five deputies there — enough for one faction.

"Yabloko" also donated generously (considering the faction's size) — three people. The LDPR delegated one deputy to the Legislation Committee, but this is also explicable: This form of activity has never been among Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's priorities. The position of the "Russia Is Our Home" [NDR] faction was surprising, though: It sent to the Duma's main committee only one deputy. It is interesting to know how the government faction is going to steer various government bills through the Duma without having a substantial number of its representatives on the corresponding committee. Incidentally, the situation is becoming even more enigmatic considering that the first stage of interfactional negotiations failed only because the NDR categorically refused to cede the committee chairmanship to the Communists.

True, this committee will be handling bills which do not directly bear on economic policy. Quite another matter is the Budget Committee, to which 48 people have applied for membership — eight Communists, eight NDR deputies, six "Yabloko" members, 11 from the "Russian Regions" group, and so forth.

As concerns the Economic Policy Committee, which in the past Duma received the image of a structure more "academic" than one working with live money, it did not arouse particular enthusiasm among the new deputies: Only 14 people have joined it (five from the CPRF and one from the NDR). On the other hand, the Industry, Construction, Transport, and Energy Committee became the second largest, with 26 deputies, including nine Communists.

More than 20 deputies are planning to work in the committees on international affairs, defense, and security and also on federal affairs and regional policy. The Communists have an effective majority in all these committees except the Security Committee, which contains eight LDPR faction members.

Twenty deputies each will be working on the Property and Agrarian Affairs Committees. The Tourism and Sports Committee, though, appeared attractive to only six. Likewise, there are only a few experts on geopolitics (seven deputies), ecology (eight), and nationality affairs (also eight) in the Duma.

Under the permanent rules, the minimum number of a committee is 12 deputies. But the rules have one qualification — "as a rule," which means that even those committees which do not have that number will still exist.

Russia: Last Two Duma Committee Chairmen Named in Decree

MM3001160296 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 30 Jan 96 p 6

[Unattributed "Official" announcement]

[FBIS Translated Text] A State Duma decree has filled the last two committee chairman vacancies:

Health Protection — Nikolay Fedorovich Gerasimenko;
Problems of the North — Vladimir Vladimirovich Goman.

Russia: Lebed Open to Cooperation With Yavlinskiy in Duma

LD2901133396 Moscow INFORMATSIONNOYE AGENTSTVO EKHO MOSKVY in Russian 0840 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] [no dateline as received] — "I am a friend of all professionals, and Yavlinskiy is a professional," Aleksandr Lebed, Congress of Russian Communities leader and State Duma deputy, told Ekho Moskvy radio station, asked about the possibility of him cooperating with Yabloko leader Grigoriy Yavlinskiy in the State Duma.

"The fact that we have been given places in different political cages does not mean we have to sit in them," Lebed emphasized.

Regional Affairs

Nemtsov: Yeltsin To Publish Concept for Ending Chechen War

LD2901195296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1848 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] NIZHNIY NOVGOROD, Jan 29 (INTERFAX-EURASIA) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin is ready to publish his concept for an end to military operations in Chechnya in the near future, Nizhniy Novgorod Governor Boris Nemtsov told INTERFAX-EURASIA Monday. He said he had learned about it from Yeltsin himself at their meeting in the Kremlin earlier this afternoon.

Yeltsin said he had been "thinking a lot about how to end this war" and will soon publish corresponding proposals, Nemtsov said.

Nemtsov declined to comment on what the concept was like, saying he had proposed the withdrawal of federal troops from Chechnya and the creation of a sanitary zone around this North Caucasus republic.

Nemtsov handed over to Yeltsin an appeal to end the Chechnya war, signed by 1 million residents from his region.

According to Nemtsov, the meeting focused on four issues, including financial and property power sharing between the center and the region, the social and political situation in the country in the wake of the Chechnya events, the national fair of industry and arts in Nizhniy Novgorod this year and prospects for the presidential elections.

Nemtsov said Yeltsin had instructed his chief executive, Nikolay Yegorov, to prepare the power-sharing treaty for signing by late February.

Nemtsov said he had briefed Yeltsin on a recent opinion poll on the presidential elections conducted in his region. Local residents put Yeltsin only in fifth position, putting ahead the leader of the Communist Party of Russia, Gennadiy Zyuganov; Yabloko leader Grigoriy Yavlinskiy; leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and one of the leaders of the Congress of Russian Communities, Aleksandr Lebed.

Yeltsin was surprised at the poll results, Nemtsov said.

Speaking on the TV program "Hero of the Day" Monday evening, Nemtsov said he would support Boris Yeltsin's re-election as Russian president, if the latter stops the war in Chechnya.

"Today this is one of the most serious problems of Russia that Yeltsin is capable of solving as the supreme commander-in-chief, as the head of state, and as a person who controls all the key ministries and bodies and who may mediate in peace talks," Nemtsov stated.

According to Nemtsov, "today a situation has emerged similar to that in the mid-80s when the Afghan war became literally hateful for everyone."

At the same time, Nemtsov said he had "simply good relations" with Yeltsin. "I have always tried to tell Boris Nikolayevich [Yeltsin] what I think I have to say," he added. "It seems to me that he behaved just like that when he was as old as I am now," Nemtsov remarked.

Nizhniy Novgorod Head Discusses Yeltsin, Chechnya

LD2901195896 Moscow NTV in Russian 1635 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Summary] NTV carries on its "Hero of the Day" program a 25-minute interview with Nizhniy Novgorod Governor Boris Yefimovich Nemtsov by announcer Pavel Lobkov. Nemtsov reports on his meeting earlier in the day with President Boris Yeltsin, during which Nemtsov presented to Yeltsin a document certifying that a petition signed by 1 million Nizhniy Novogorod inhabitants calling for the Chechnya war to be stopped had been deposited with the local archives. "The president seemed to take these signatures very seriously," Nemtsov says, adding that Yeltsin had been most impressed that the signatures had been collected in just 10 days.

Announcer Pavel Lobkov suggests that fact that Yeltsin accepted the petition would help the his presidential campaign. Nemtsov says: "You know, these signatures could work in and against the president's favor. If he reacts to public opinion, if the war in Chechnya really does end soon, then many of those who signed the petition could indeed vote for Boris Nikolayevich [Yeltsin]. If there is no response, if the bloody carnage continues and grows, then those signatures could be against the president." Nemtsov says he is sure 30 or 50 million signatures could be collected throughout Russia; similar initiatives are being started in other regions.

Asked whether he had been advised not to present the petition, Nemtsov replies: "Well, nobody told me directly not to talk to the president about this, but I think many people in the president's entourage are displeased. On the other hand, you can't get away from the truth. I consider it my duty to inform the president what is happening, especially in the run-up to the elections."

Nemtsov says President Yeltsin had been in fine form, "cheerful, smart, and has lost some weight. He seemed to me to be pretty well in control of the situation. At least, when I showed him public opinion polls about his chances in the forthcoming presidential elections, he reacted very calmly; the results which the "Itogi" program has been reporting came as no surprise to him. He seemed to me to be up on affairs, and he genuinely wanted to know the truth, including the truth about his chances." According to official polls, about 6 percent of Nizhniy Novgorod inhabitants are prepared to back Yeltsin, compared with over 10 percent for Gennadiy Zyuganov, Nemtsov says. "But I think Yeltsin's chances would increase considerably if the Chechnya war was stopped."

Asked if he plans to back Yeltsin, Nemtsov says: "I shall support Boris Nikolayevich if he ends the war in Chechnya. It's as simple as that, absolutely. I think this is one of the most serious problems in Russia today, one that he is able to solve, as the supreme comander in chief, as the head of state, and finally as a man who controls all the power structures, who can be a mediator in negotiations and so on."

Nemtsov says he has spoken publicly to condemn the war, and had visited Chechnya last year for humanitarian purposes to take medicines and humanitarian aid. There were more than 5,000 soldiers from Nizhniy Novgorod in Chechnya last year, and 50 have been killed in the war.

Lobkov comments that St. Petersburg Mayor Anatoliy Sobchak has said he would send no money or workers from the city to Chechnya. Nemtsov replies: "In the first place, none of the regions spends a single penny on Chechnya, the money comes from the federal budget"; the regions pay taxes into that budget. Nemtsov says he thinks the 16 trillion rubles and 1 billion dollars allocated for rehabilitation of Checnya's national economic is "senseless, especially given that pensions and wages are not paid on time, military orders are not financed, and virtually all state programs are falling to pieces — and money like that is being spent! And that money, incidentally, might not even get to Chechnya, it could be simply stolen." The decision to spend this money also wrecks all the budget plans, he says.

Lobkov points out that it has been officially announced that the Chechnya rehabilition funds would not be to the detriment of the budget. Nemtsov says one should not be so naive as to think there is another source of such sums other than the budget, so that 16 trillion rubles could only be money that is not going to pay pensions and allowances. He suggests that the profits from the Groznyy refinery should be used to rehabilitate Chechnya. "I am absolutely convinced that it is financially ruinous and fatal for the whole of Russia, and senseless from the point of view of the presidential election campaign" to spend such sums. Nemtsov questions Lobkov's assertions that the money would in fact be spent anyway: "There is indeed a decision on this, but that does not mean the money will be spent. There are lots of decisions all over the place, but these decisions do not always turn into real money." The Duma and Federation Council would have to examine the financing issue, he says, and he is sure that Doku Zavgayev would be the only deputy to vote for it.

In a video profile of Nizhniy Novorod's economic advances, an NTV correspondent says Nemtsov is not demanding more economic independence for the region, but has drawn up a draft treaty on financial relations with the center, which he had discussed with Yeltsin that day. Nemtsov, in the studio, says this document would be signed at the end of February, but gives no details. "The president is of course hoping for support, no doubt about it. But he personally said nothing about making the signing of the treaty dependent upon loyalty to the president, and I don't think he would be able to do so; it would just be an insult for him."

Lobkov asks whether Nemtsov has any implacable opponents among the federal bodies of power. Nemtsov says such opponents only emerge when one aspires to an official position in Moscow, something he has never aspired to and never would. All leaders have political opponents, Nemtsov says, adding that economic policies are always based upon political conceptions.

Nemtsov says he had backed Yegor Stroyev's bid for chairmanship of the Federation Council because he knew him as a good governor, who had implemented a land reform program similar to that in Nizhniy Novgorod Region and one that both the Communist Party and the Agrarian Party oppose. Nemtsov was still a small child when Stroyev was in the Politburo, he adds.

After a video profile of Nemtsov's career, Lobkov asks whether Nemtsov has had any failures. Nemtsov says reorganization of the fuel and energy complex had not been wholly succcessful, but that in general, he did not make promises he could not keep. He denies that measures such as ordering public sector employees to be paid before civil servants were merely popularist. One of his election platforms had been to tax the rich: Nemtsov explains a measure would be introduced whereby the rich would pay the full price for municipal utilities and accommodation and would receive no subsidies from the local budgets.

Nemtsov chooses not to make any predictions about his future, saying: "In Russia it would be absurd to make predictions about one's future, particularly one's political future, for even a year ahead, to say nothing of the next millenium. We'll see."

Chernomyrdin 'Action Group' Set Up in St. Petersburg

MM3001162196 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 30 Jan 96 p 1

[Report by Vasiliy Kononenko: "Yeltsin and Chernomyrdin May Join in the Election Campaign Simultaneously"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The INTERFAX report from St. Petersburg that an action group has been set up there to nominate V. Chernomyrdin as a candidate for the presidency should be regarded as a signal that both President B. Yeltsin and the premier may join in the election race for the presidency simultaneously. Many facts militate in favor of this assumption.

Above all, according to IZVESTIYA's information, the so-called "action group" in the city on the Neva did not arise spontaneously but in accordance with a plan worked out in advance by the staff of the "Russia Is Our Home" [NDR] movement. Similar groups had been set up in good time in a number of the country's major cities under this plan so that, on the first signal from Moscow, they would send appeals to the Central Electoral Commission asking for Chernomyrdin to be registered as a presidential candidate. This tactic fully conforms with the intention announced earlier by S. Belyayev, leader of the NDR Staff, to join in the election race if the president does not consent to put forward his own candidacy. At present, however, no one doubts anymore that Yeltsin will join in the election marathon. Therefore the signal from St. Petersburg seems illogical at first sight. Nevertheless, it does not mean that there has been a "misunderstanding" between the president and the premier. It is most likely the reverse — we are seeing a revision of the election campaign tactics.

Sources in the premier's entourage told IZVESTIYA's correspondent that the NDR Political Council will meet 10 February to decide the question of Chernomyrdin's participation in the election campaign. Let us note that the Political Council is meeting one week before the moment when Yeltsin, to judge from his statements, is to make public his own decision concerning participation in the election. Consequently, some kind of new accord already exists between the premier and the president. Otherwise Chernomyrdin, who is known as a man of his word, would not have allowed his entourage to take such a risky political initiative. The logical conclusion from this is that both Yeltsin and Chernomyrdin must join in the election campaign simultaneously so as to ensure a more concentrated assault on the voters and to struggle together against the communists. Maybe at some stage one of them will withdraw his candidacy in favor of his partner. Incidentally, some analysts in the president's entourage are also proposing a similar scheme today.

Russia: Mosque Blown Up in Center of Vladikavkaz

LD3001074796 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0727 GMT 30 Jan 96

[By Valeriy Shanayev]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] VLADIKAVKAZ January 30 (ITAR-TASS) — A Moslem shrine was blown up last night in the centre of the North Ossetian capital.

According to the law enforcement agencies, the explosion took place at about 04.00 in the morning. A powerful explosive device destroyed one of the walls of the Sunni mosque belonging to the Spiritual Board of the North Ossetian Moslems.

The case is being investigated. The territory around the mosque, located in the most picturesque part of Vladikavkaz, on the bank of the Terek River, is surrounded by the police.

An attempt was made in Vladikavkaz in the middle of January to blow up a monument, which symbolizes the friendship of the Russian and Ossetian nations. The criminals have not been found so far.

Dzankhot Khekilayev, head of the Spiritual Board of Moslems, described in a TASS interview the blowing up of the Sunni mosque as a "crime of bandits in the face of Allah."

Russia: Official Condemns Vladikavkaz Mosque Explosion

LD3001155996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1345 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 30 (INTERFAX) — Chairman of Russia's Interim Committee for Settling the Ossetian-Ingush Conflict Vladimir Lozovoy described the explosion in the mosque of Vladikavkaz, the capital of North Ossetia, during the night of January 29, as a "barbaric act" and laid the blame for it on the "forces interested in destabilizing the situation in the North Caucasus."

Lozovoy believes that the choice of the city's only working mosque was not accidental "given the complicated social and political situation in this explosive region." He said, however, that it was premature to make any conclusions.

A criminal investigation has been initiated.

Russia: Moscow Oblast's Economy 'In a Nosedive'

MM3001134496 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 27 Jan 96 p 2

[Report by Yuriy Makhrin: "Moscow Region's Economy in a Nosedive"]

[FBIS Translated Text] You should not count your chickens before they are hatched, as everyone knows. But the results characterizing the economies of the Russian republics, krays, and oblasts are summed up, as a rule, in January. The Moscow Committee for State Statistics has provided the following data.

The economic barometer of one of Russia's largest oblasts, contrary to the stabilization claims made by the president and the Chubayses, again suggests that the rapid slump is continuing both in the city and in the countryside. The production of industrial output at enterprises in Moscow Oblast was just 80 percent of the 1994 level.

But the situation in the agrarian sector remains particularly severe. The private farmers have not fed Russia, unfortunately. And the kolkhozes and sovkhozes are in a state of ruin. All the indicators have fallen to last year's level.

But if you compare the figures with the 1990 indicators they clearly show that the countryside is in a nosedive. The production of grain and potatoes is down by almost 50 percent, vegetable production is down 55 percent, meat, livestock, and poultry production is down 57 percent, and egg production is down 44 percent. Moscow region's poultry farms, its pride and joy, are in ruin. Russia's rulers, who relied not on their own producers but on the notorious "Bush's drumsticks," are endangering the country's food security.

Until quite recently Moscow Oblast was renowned for its high milk yields. As a result of the "reforms" the productivity of cows has fallen by a factor of 1.5. Grain and vegetable yields have fallen sharply.

In view of the imminent catastrophe in store for the Moscow countryside, many farm directors have sent an open letter to A. Tyazhlov, head of Moscow Oblast Administration. Among other things the letter says: "The land is crying out for help from the organs of state management."

Will that call be heeded by the authorities who have sold off the plants and factories for peanuts and are ready to do the same with Russia's national asset — the land?

Russia: Moscow City Profits From Sale of State Property

MM2901161796 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 27 Jan 96 p 10

[Unattributed report: "Then We Started Counting the Profits..."]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the past year, according to figures from the Russian Federation State Tax Service, the Russian Federation State Committee for the Management of State Property [GKI] earned 7.2 trillion rubles [R] from the sale of state property.

In particular, total proceeds from the sale of municipally owned enterprises in Moscow alone came to around R300 billion. Slightly more than R50 billion of this sum was remitted to the federal budget.

As is well known, Mayor Yuriy Luzhkov of Moscow stated in a speech at the Moscow City Duma that Russia's capital had made far more from privatization than the GKI had. According to him, last year Moscow earned R4.3 trillion from the privatization and competitive sale of real estate, and through leasehold agreements — compared with the R3 trillion received by the GKI.

In this connection the GKI points out that "it is wrong and incorrect" to compare the GKI's privatization proceeds with the revenue raised for the Moscow budget from privatization, or from the competitive sale of real estate and leasehold agreements, since no provision is made for contributions to the federal budget from these quarters.

Russia: Cossacks Gain Army Unit Status in Stavropol

LD3001181696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1628 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] STAVROPOL, Jan 30 (INTERFAX) — Cossack units that will be formed to patrol the borders of the Stavropol territory will have the status of army units. Petr Marchenko, the Stavropol governor, said at a news conference in Stavropol Tuesday. He referred to an understanding he had reached with Nikolay Yegorov, the presidential chief of staff, and Mikhail Barsukov, the director of the Federal Security Service (FSB).

Marchenko said that a Coordinating Council reporting to the governor will command these units and this idea has the support of Cossack leaders in the territory. A total of 9 billion rubles will be released to strengthen the FSB Stavropol branch with a view to enhance anti-terrorist measures, he added. He and Barsukov had agreed to this after a recent meeting in Moscow, he said.

Russia: New Kaliningrad Economic Zone Law Viewed

MM3101093396 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 27 Jan 96 p 10

[Unattributed "Commentary" followed by commentary by Anna Kozyreva: "Budget's Forgotten Enclave" — from the "Business in Russia" section]

[FBIS Translated Text] At the "last minute" the Federation Council approved the Law on the Creation of a Special Economic Zone in Kaliningrad Oblast. Nevertheless it would be premature to say that the oblast could obtain autonomy in economic activity.

What exactly in this case lies behind the desire to see Kalingrad Oblast as a free economic zone?

First of all we must talk about the desire to provide the conditions for the region's economic survival. Second, about the need to ensure that the oblast is as attractive as possible to domestic and foreign investors. Finally, about the elaboration of a simple and effective mechanism for financial earnings to be paid into the budget from the region and a mechanism for the effective use of centralized investment. The oblast has practically everything needed to achieve these objectives. In fact, Kaliningrad Oblast provides Russia with 10 percent of total fish products, 6 percent of pulp, and 4 percent of paper. Ninety percent of the world's amber resources are concentrated on its territory and its extraction is second to none in the world. There are many minerals here, including major proved oil reserves. Over 70 percent of all output produced in the oblast is exported beyond its confines.

But it is this factor which lately has actually played a negative role. The point is that in the last few years Lithuania has exerted fairly strong economic pressure on the oblast. This has been expressed in direct and hidden surcharges for freight transit, in the levying of deposit payments, in the restriction of the flow of defense freight.... Lithuania is also demanding payment for compulsory police freight escort throughout the territory.

The effect of such increased transport costs is leading to price increases of up to 7 percent and the reduced competitiveness of Russian output produced in the oblast. Another result directly linked with the increased cost of freight transportation is a sharp reduction in the volume of freight handling at Kaliningrad ports. In 1994-1995 freight turnover decreased 50 percent, which led to a reduction in tax revenues.

In 1991 the oblast was declared the "Amber" free economic zone. A number of presidential edicts and government decrees created a mechanism for the free economic zone to function. The gradual structural reorganization of the oblast economy began. Foreign trade turnover increased 100-150 percent every year. Consumer prices for food products and consumer goods fell to average Russian levels.

But 6 March 1995 saw the publication of a presidential edict aimed at creating equal conditions for all Russian regions and enterprises. For Kaliningrad it actually meant the abolition of customs concessions. This immediately hit the economic region. Immediately the production slump intensified at enterprises which use a significant volume of imported raw materials and bought-in items from the Baltic region, Belarus, and other CIS countries. The activities of enterprises with foreign investment was frozen because previously concluded contracts for export and import deliveries were canceled.

The rate of price increases has begun to outstrip the following Russian averages: the aggregate consumer prices index by 16 percent, food goods by 28 percent, nonfood goods by 10 percent, and consumer services by 27 percent.

In the second and third quarters of 1995 foreign trade turnover volumes decreased 15 percent as against the maximum level reached in the first quarter before customs concessions were abolished.

By July 1995 the cost of imported goods had increased 24 percent. While in August the import of goods simply decreased: fuels and lubricants by a factor of 1.2, butter by a factor of 8.8, and poultry meat by a factor of 5.6. Compared with the same period in 1994 20-30 percent less consumer goods and food products were imported into the oblast.

In 1995 the enclave's costs totaled 360.92 billion rubles [R], whereas customs payments did not exceed R300 billion.

In 1995 the oblast missed out on $40 million of investment because enterprises having specific projects with joint and foreign investors simply failed to set about implementing them. While the cost of construction work involving foreign investors increased 30 percent.

In addition, a sharp change of policy — from the announcement of the 10-year free economic zone regime to the unexpected abolition of all concessions considerably earlier than the deadline announced — led to a situation whereby Russian foreign economic policy was discredited in the eyes of foreign entrepreneurs.

The restoration of the free economic zone was essential from the political and economic viewpoint. Economists' calculations have shown that bringing back tax concessions would make it possible to compensate for 83.1 percent of the costs of the region's enclave situation.

[Kozyreva begins] It would seem that everything is, as they say, okay, especially as the law has already been passed by the Duma and approved by the upper chamber. But unfortunately the law itself suffers from a number of flaws. Thus, Article 7 of this law contains the provision that the zone's administration, jointly with the customs committee, establish a procedure for determining a good's country of origin. This mechanism is supposed to guarantee that the oblast will not turn into a hole through which resources and goods from the whole of Russia will be pumped on preferential terms. Therefore experts believe that this procedure should be established by the government.

Article 12 envisages the granting of a national regime to foreign banks on the oblast's territory, which does not conform to banking legislation. Article 19 contradicts the Customs Code, insofar as it actually excludes customs organs from the list of currency control organs and agents.

In addition, experts are firmly convinced that currently it is absolutely impossible to create this free economic zone in Kaliningrad. After all, the 1996 budget has already been passed. The free economic zone does not figure in at all. "It is possible that, with this law in his pocket, the governor might go to parliament and propose that the budget be reviewed. While he still has some chance of obtaining a little more in subsidies or grants from the center" — this is the opinion of the Federation Council Committee for Economic Reform Questions. They stress that "so far nobody has even brought customs concessions back to the oblast."

Thus, the law remains more of an empty declaration of intent at the moment. Especially as a federation-wide law on free economic zones does not yet exist. And such a law is not going to "materialize" because not a single Russian region has a suitable infrastructure for creating a special zone: There are neither the roads, nor a reliable communications system, nor many other things. Incidentally, experts think that the idea itself of declaring a entire major oblast a free economic zone is unrealistic. But if a smaller territory were designated within it, the likelihood of a free economic zone's functioning would immediately increase.

In the opinion of experts we should now be talking not about a free economic zone but a special customs regime zone.

Russia: Maritime Government Hastens To Repay Miners' Wages

LD3101121096 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1011 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] VLADIVOSTOK, Jan 31 (INTERFAX-Eurasia) — The Maritime territorial administration is taking urgent measures to repay debts to miners.

Vice Governor of the Maritime territory Mikhail Savchenko told INTERFAX-Eurasia Wednesday that in accordance with the tariff agreement between the miners and the federal government, 9 billion rubles have been urgently transferred to the bank account of the joint-stock company Primorskugol. Another 25 billion rubles have been transferred from the federal budget to the miners' main debtor, the joint-stock company Dalenergo.

To quote Savchenko, Governor of the Maritime territory Yevgeniy Nazdratenko "has got Moscow" extend a subsidy of more than 200 billion rubles to Dalenergo. Fifty percent of the sum will go to Primorskugol. In addition to this, the government has freed Primorskugol from the tax on the wage fund as a compensation for Dalenergo's debt.

Savchenko expressed hope that Dalenergo will fully repay its debts to Primorkugol shortly.

The wage debt owed to the miners of the Maritime territory amounts to 120 billion rubles.

Economic Issues

Yeltsin Orders 'Prompt' Paying of Debt to Kemerovo Region

LD3001193496 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English
1714 GMT 30 Jan 96

[By Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, January 30 (ITAR-TASS) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin instructed Premier Viktor Chernomyrdin to take prompt measures to pay off the federal budget debt to the Kemerovo coal mining region.

Presidential spokesman Sergey Medvedev told reporters on Tuesday that the current social and economic situation in the Kemerovo region "needs prompt interference."

The government's debt to coal mining enterprises in the region amounted to around 200 billion roubles last year. Wages for workers of the enterprises are delayed for two to three months.

Russia: Wage Arrears Chaos Could Spark Explosion

MM3001204396 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian
30 Jan 96 p 1

[Report by Irina Savvateyeva: "Wages Must Be Paid! Employers Owe Russians R13.4 Trillion for 1995"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The heart-rending, almost hysterical enthusiasm with which the authorities are now rushing to resolve the wages problem — a problem that has not just suddenly emerged — does not augur well. Edicts and decrees, special funds and special timetables, personal oversight by the president and personnel revolutions in the government....

But will all this sound and fury help to resolve this problem that affects millions of Russians?

As of 1 January 1996, the State Committee for Statistics tells us, the total amount owed for salaries by industrial, construction, transportation, and agricultural enterprises had reached 13.4 trillion rubles [R]. And almost a third of this sum (30 percent) was made up of sums which have been owed for over two months.

Given this kind of scale of arrears it would seem more appropriate to call pay "nonpay." Judge for yourselves — the statistically average worker in the industrial sector is owed R529,000 (or 78 percent of earnings); in construction the figure is R504,000 (63 percent); in transportation it is R303,000 (32 percent); and in agriculture it is R374,000 (or 139 percent of average earnings) [All figures as published].

Nonetheless, responsibility for all the R13 trillion-odd owed should not be pinned on the federal budget — as many opponents of tough budgetary policy and budget-lobbying structures are trying to do. As is well known, a significant proportion of Russian industry has been privatized and is not funded out of state coffers. Agriculture and the mining sector are an exception. Those who are also paid out of the federal budget include the state apparatus, all the "power" structures (servicemen's pay included), as well as some science, cultural, health, education, and construction enterprises in federal hands.

So just what proportion of the R13-trillion debt has emerged as a result of the federal budget failing to meet its commitments to fund wages?

"We handed over R39.6 trillion of the R40.3 trillion which the Finance Ministry was meant to have allocated for wages and servicemen's pay in the first 11 months of 1995," IZVESTIYA was told by Aleksandr Smirnov, leader of the Russian Federation Finance Ministry

Main Administration for the Federal Treasury. "Or 96.2 percent."

There is no doubt that the R700 billion that was not paid out amounted to big money for those who did not receive it. Nonetheless, the figures quoted by the treasury leader clearly strike a discordant note in the hysterical antibudget campaign that has recently been launched over the problem of the nonpayment of wages.

According to the treasury leader, two factors basically determine the future fate of budget money. The funds allocated to wages are often channeled into municipal payments — the banks simply withdraw them from enterprises' accounts with no questions asked. But, in Aleksandr Smirnov's view, the main reason why the budget trillions are not being used as directly intended is to do with ministerial arbitrariness.

The ministries receiving budget funds try to avoid any state control over the distribution of the money obtained, yet they display a remarkable eagerness when it comes to extracting new funds. The "Rosugol" company is an archetypal example.

"I can state with complete authority," Aleksandr Smirnov told IZVESTIYA, "that the amount laid down in the '95 budget to fund 'Rosugol' was paid in full. And that another R130 billion was paid out over and above that figure in 1995. But in January this year we were to hand over to the miners R200 billion, yet we were ordered to allocate R570."

The weak political positions of the current authorities and their extreme vulnerability to lobbying — which seems to have turned into a Russian national disaster — are among the most serious reasons why the wage arrears problem has arisen. Neither the premier nor the president can afford to say to the miners: "You've got pay problems? Go to the 'Rosugol' leadership and talk to them about reforming the system for running the sector." The premier and the president find it easier today to pay off excessively active sections of the electorate. But this approach effectively resolves nothing — in the unreformed coal sector the wages problem will be reproduced with stubborn regularity, and weaker and less-well-organized sectors will have to pay (with their own wages) for the "Rosugol" leadership's ambitions. The Finance Ministry was forced to solve the January problems regarding funding for the miners by cutting the funds earmarked for the regions. And this means that local doctors and teachers — who are paid out of Federation component budgets — will suffer once again.

The main reason why these budgets are short of funds is to do with nonpayments. Indeed, the nonpayments by enterprises to budgets at all levels and the nonpayment of wages by the same enterprises to their own workers have one and the same root cause.

It is obvious that this situation could continue until we have the first social explosion. Then the authorities will be forced either to seriously tackle the painstaking work of organizing market levers to allow us to maintain control over the economy — tax reform, a recapitalization and bankruptcy mechanism, budget execution controls, and effective administration of state property — or to finally deal with emergency situations and unbridled populism by cranking up the printing presses.

Russia: Soskovets Plans To Raise Investment in Social Sphere

LD3101114496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1011 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 31 (INTERFAX) — The government's intention to pay more attention to the social sphere and support domestic manufacturers should not be regarded as a change in the economic policy ahead of the presidential elections slated for June 1996, Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets said.

The government will continue its anti-inflationary tough monetary policy, Soskovets confirmed in an interview with INTERFAX on Wednesday.

He also said that the government will focus on creating favorable conditions for investment, fighting inflation, encouraging manufacturers and resolving social problems.

At the same time, it will continue to support key industries and the social sphere.

He said public investment will reach 27 trillion rubles in 1996, 70 percent of which will go to housing construction, health care, and science and culture. The total volume of investment in the economy will amount to 310 trillion rubles.

Under a federal investment program for 1996, the chemical industry will receive 5.5 trillion rubles. Investments will also be made in the production of medicines and medical equipment and the expansion of chemical products vital for social welfare.

In nuclear power engineering, the government will invest in increasing the safety of nuclear power stations and the construction of nuclear power plants in Kursk and Kalinin, as well as heat-generating plants at the Beloyarsk and Bilibino nuclear power stations.

Russia: Soskovets' Commission Looks at Airlines' Problems

MK3101115996 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 31 Jan 96 p 2

[Report by Svetlana Lolayeva: "Oleg Soskovets Finds Mechanism To Sell Unclaimed Aircraft"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Yesterday's session of the government commission on current issues chaired by First Deputy Premier Oleg Soskovets looked at measures to protect the traditional market of Russian civil aircraft and that of air carriage. According to Tatyana Alodina, chairperson of a working interdepartmental commission set up early last December, 17 of the existing 388 airlines account for 75 percent of the air services with 94 airlines taking care of 25 percent more air services, whereas the remaining 200 airlines account for less than one percent of the services. Despite the fact that domestic air tariffs have grown 8,000 times over since 1991, most airlines lose on domestic air services. None of the airlines can afford to buy aircraft. As a result, more than 100 planes and helicopters have no buyers with another 500 aircraft unclaimed after repairs. High fuel prices and less than perfect tariffs place airlines in an unequal position with their rivals not only in the far abroad but also in CIS-member countries, according to Ms. Alodina. In a bid to resolve these problems, the commission drew up a draft presidential edict and a draft government decree setting up a federal civil aviation administrative body and introducing state regulation in civil aviation concerning certification of legal entities and persons in charge of flight safety, licensing and inspection of all air carriers, and exempting airlines, airports, and enterprises manufacturing and developing aircraft of paying the profit and value-added tax. Furthermore, it is supposed to develop a mechanism for selling aircraft by using financial leasing arrangements and to set aside for these purposes 2 trillion rubles in 1996.

The latter proposal was negatively assessed by the Finance and the Economics Ministries. Addressing the session, Economics Minister Yevgeniy Yasin said that, given the current state of the budget, the possibility of setting aside 2 trillion rubles is in the "realm of illusions." According to him, the Economics Ministry is not supposed to concern itself with creating leasing companies supplying money from the budget. The ministry, nevertheless, is prepared to promote the interests of airlines in this country and abroad provided they submit feasible business plans.

Having assigned to the commission the task to fine-tune the draft edict and the draft decree inside two weeks, Oleg Soskovets, however, stated that he considers the discussion on a mechanism for leasing-arrangement purchases to be over. In addition, the first deputy premier told the Economics and the Transportation Ministries to estimate, inside one month, the cost of the unclaimed aircraft at aviation enterprises (80 planes and 40 helicopters) and arrange for handing them over to "users." In his opinion, this is supposed to mark the first step in setting up leasing companies. It is, however, unknown what attitude to this unexpected gift is going to be taken by the "users", that is to say, airlines, which have many complaints against the products of local aircraft manufacturers, nor is it known who is going to pay for this generous gift.

Moscow Sets Up International Investment Union

LD3001211096 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2047 GMT 30 Jan 96

[By Aleksandr Samozhnev]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, January 30 (ITAR-TASS) — A business conference opened in Moscow on Tuesday to found the International Investment Union (IIU), whose major aim is to attract foreign investment into Russia and create a favourable business climate in it.

The foundation conference has passed a memorandum, saying that the emerging union is set to support economically progressive draft laws and decisions in the field of finance.

The IIU is to promote cooperation of its members with international investment and finance institutions.

Other lines of its activities envision information and counselling services to investors and producers, assistance to emerging joint-stock companies, joint ventures and other businesses for the implementation of investment projects.

Addressing the conference, Russian Finance Minister Yevgeniy Yasin said that his ministry backs the IIU and expects it to be successful in investment attraction.

He recalled that earlier counterparts of the IIU, such as the Russian Financial Corporation, had been unsuccessful.

Investment in Russia in 1995 has fallen off by 13 per cent compared with 1994. For investment to qualify as normal, the proportion of it in gross national product should make 20-22 per cent, Yasin said.

The state should have a part in reducing investment risks, the minister continued. He promised that the Economics Ministry would pursue its programme of investment tenders.

Under this programme, promising projects employing innovative technologies are eligible for 50 per cent funding by the state. Export-oriented project may count on 40 per cent and import-replacing ones for up to 30 per cent funding.

Founders of the investment union include the Finance Ministry, Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, Moscow regional administration, Invest-Bank and International Privatisation and Foreign Investment Foundation.

Russia: CPRF Economic Policies Already Being Implemented

MM3101130496 Moscow FINANSOVYYE IZVESTIYA in Russian 26 Jan 96 p 1

[Article by Yevgeniy Vasilchuk: "Opposition Economic Program Has Begun To Be Implemented" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Translated Text] Just one week ago Anatoliy Chubays' dismissal seemed to be a "technical" move, President Yeltsin's unavoidable sacrifice in order to preserve democracy and the policy of market reforms in Russia. The disgraced first vice premier did not object to this interpretation. Even Yeltsin's accusations of privatization mistakes were not particularly surprising. After all, there had been mistakes — serious ones, furthermore — and the fact that the president remembered them very late was attributed to current political circumstances.

The concern of the financial markets and Western investors was allayed somewhat by the confident statements of the president and the premier on the irreversibility of the reforms. The hastily signed edicts on the temporary "tax amnesty" and on the establishment of order in the payment of wages to budget-funded workers could also be viewed, if one wanted, as an unavoidable concession by the authorities and an attempt by Yeltsin to score points in the pre-election race.

In the past few days the situation has changed radically. There has been a final demarcation in the policy of President Yeltsin and all those forces in Russia customarily known as liberal reformers. In the economy the Communist Party's economic program has immediately begun to be implemented.

The State Duma has approved the extraordinary 50 percent indexation of the minimum wage and pensions as of 1 February. A set of documents has been drawn up to fix prices for certain goods and introduce budget subsidies for others. Various schemes are being actively discussed whereby taxes will be used to regulate price formation correctly. The eternal question of compensation for investments is not going to go away, either. The task of freezing wages or of linking it administratively to some economic normative is bound to feature on the agenda later.

The legislators' initiative has been supported by the executive. The exceptional payment to settle the miners' 600 billion rubles [R] budget debts has confirmed in practice that the authorities have no intention of haggling over it, even less of investigating the reasons for the wage arrears. Even in the nonbudget sphere. There is no time left for that now.

Rebellious Chechnya is a headache not only for the politicians and the military but also for the financiers. The president has issued an instruction allocating R16 trillion to the rebuilding of the republic's shattered economy in 1996. It is obvious to the naked eye what a heavy burden this is going to be on the Russian budget and economy.

So far in January the trend in inflation remains stable. If consumer prices rise more slowly at the end of the month, as usual, the increase over the month will be 3.5 percent. But if there is a fueling of inflationary expectations, January's inflation figure could even reach 4.5 percent. The future is characterized by uncertainty. In view of the demand- and cost-driven inflation that developed in the second half of 1995, we should see a continuation of the moderate reduction of 0.2-0.3 percent a month. But these forecasts are unlikely to come true.

There are far greater misgivings over the revival of activity in currency market dealings. The fact that nonexchange sector price quotations exceed exchange sector quotations is also a bad symptom. Either the currency market has begun a major campaign to boost the dollar exchange rate or else there are now free ruble resources in the financial system. Certain fluctuations in the yield of state securities suggest that the former option remains more likely at the moment. It is just one short step from there to a "flight from the ruble" instigated by the authorities' decisions and the opposition's intentions.

The restoration of almost complete state control over the Savings Bank and the population's savings could only be welcomed if conditions were different. However, only one fate awaits people's savings now — they will be consumed by the state. According to Bank of Russia Chairman Sergey Dubinin, the reliability of the state's financial obligations is guaranteed by its ability to issue money.

The markets are also becoming nervous over the long delay in the appointment of a new vice premier. If they do not want to appoint an outside candidate, the simplest solution would be to give one of the existing vice premiers a higher status. Preferably one of the younger and more energetic ones. But the "tried and tested cadres" could also do a good job.

Russia: Growth in Nuclear Energy Production Noted

LD3101120796 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1011 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 31 (INTERFAX) — Russian nuclear power plants produced 99,328 million kilowatt-hour of energy in 1995, a 1.5 percent increase over 1994 when energy production was 97,831.6 million kilowatt-hour.

An official at Rosenergoatom, Russia's monopoly nuclear energy producer, told INTERFAX on Wednesday that nuclear power stations operated in a stable and reliable manner in 1995.

There were only three major incidents last year compared to eight in 1995.

Two of them ranked first-level incidents on the INES scale of nuclear incidents (one in 1994) and another a second-level one (seven in 1994).

There were 11 incidents of automatic shut-down (as many in 1994) and in 28 instances generators were deactivated (as many in 1994).

The official said that there were a total of 95 incidents in 1995, 33 incidents fewer than in 1994. Radioactive emissions did not exceed the established norms.

Russia has 29 operating generators at nine nuclear power plants.

International Affairs

Defense Minister Shmarov Considers Joining NATO 'Absurd'

LD3101120396 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1011 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KIEV, Jan 31 (Interfax - Ukraine) — The claims that Ukraine is striving for NATO membership are absurd, Ukrainian Defense Minister Valeriy Shmarov told students at the Belarussian Military Academy in Minsk Tuesday.

The idea of NATO's eastward expansion is "premature," said the minister. Ukrainian legislation provides for the "off-bloc and neutral position of this country. Bilateral relations with CIS and other countries are a different thing," said Shmarov.

Ukraine has changed its stand on military danger, said the minister. In his opinion, a serious enemy cannot appear in the next few years or decades.

"Local conflicts are possible, but there will hardly be several of them at one time. It is also unlikely that neighboring countries and even more unlikely that far-away countries may unite against Ukraine as a common enemy," he said.

Commenting on relations with Russia, the minister said these countries and their armed forces "are most eligible for cooperation. They simply will not survive without each other."

The minister also named Belarus as a strategic partner of Ukraine.

Primakov Meetings in Kiev Detailed

LD3101103296 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1007 GMT 31 Jan 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Mikhail Melnik]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]KIEV, January 31 (Itar-Tass) — The main aim of talks with Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov, which open in Kiev on Wednesday, is to draft appropriate documents for an official visit to Ukraine by Russian President Boris Yeltsin. Itar-Tass learned at the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry here today.

The program of Primakov's visit provides for meetings with Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, Parliament Speaker Aleksandr Moroz and other officials.

The Russian minister will hold talks with his Ukrainian counterpart Gennadiy Udovenko. The sides will discuss the state of bilateral relations, including a division of the Black Sea Fleet and demarcation of the Ukrainian-Russian border. The ministers will also discuss international issues of mutual interest.

Earlier, Primakov said at a news conference in Moscow that Russian-Ukrainian relations "have serious problems which should be resolved." Relations with Ukraine are of priority nature for Russia, and "they should be developed and improved," he stressed.

Ukraine: Meeting With Russians Held To Control Arms Smuggling

WS3101092096 Lvov INFOBANK in English 0753 GMT 31 Jan 96

[From the "News Service" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Since January 1993, over 10 thousand items of various types of arms and over two million of different items of ammunition have been confiscated at the Ukrainian-Russian border line. This amount covers 96% of the total amount of arms confiscated all along the Ukrainian border line. This information was revealed on January 29 during a working meeting between delegations of Ukrainian and Russian border and customs institutions. The delegations were headed by the Commander-in-Chief of Ukrainian Border Guards, General Colonel Viktor Bannykh, and the Director of the Federal Border Service of the Russian Federation, General Andrey Nikolayev, respectively.

The sides approved a collaboration plan between the Southern Division of Ukrainian Border Guards and the Caucasian Special Russian Border Division. This plan provides for joint control over the Azov Sea and the Kerch Channel regions. Participants at the meeting also signed a protocol regarding joint border and customs control in passing points along the Ukrainian-Russian border line and the agenda of their work.

Ukraine: Report Accuses Russian Military of Spying

AU3001140696 Lvov ZA VILNU UKRAYINU in Ukrainian 25 Jan 96 p 1

[Report by Roman Durbak: "The Russian Military Intelligence Freely Operates on Our Territory"]

[FBIS Translated Text] **The Black Sea Fleet Intelligence conducts its activity on quite a legal basis in Ukraine. Dozens and hundreds of people start their daily work in the Third Radio Detachment and at the Black Sea Fleet's 530th Information Center and fulfill their duties in groups of intelligence provision.**

Open and secret communication channels are under their control and they monitor practically all radio channels at all frequencies. Nor is the seashore, where every marine aviation flight is recorded, left without control.

Skilled coder and decoder operators transmit and intercept wireless messages, which are used for following complex peripeteia of the world politics and for making forecasts for the future. In this manner, valuable information is procured and little keys to the great politics forged.

After Ukraine signed the international program "Partnership for Peace," Ukraine's Naval Forces became objects for particular attention on the part of the Black Sea Fleet intelligence; this particularly applies to the participation of Ukrainian servicemen in joint exercises in the Black Sea.

With the reduction of the Black Sea Fleet, technical services and the personnel of the intelligence units also formally underwent cuts. The personnel of the subunit that services the intelligence has slightly increased. This subunit gets money in hard currency from Russian territory.

How long is this situation going to prevail on Ukrainian territory? Will this end with the division of the Black Sea Fleet? Perhaps not. It may take more than a dozen years before legal and illegal agents stop gathering military and political information. At times, they are not even aware of the harm that their information may cause to the state where they live and work. However, one should not forget that even a small stone, as it falls down, may trigger an avalanche, stresses the newspaper FLOT UKRAYINY.

Ukraine: PRC Citizens Expelled Over Smuggling

LD3001200396 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1857 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KIEV, Jan 30 (Interfax - Ukraine) - A group of Chinese citizens was expelled from Ukraine for "actions contrary to the interests of national security," the press office of the Ukrainian Security Service Department for the Dnepropetrovsk region told Interfax - Ukraine Tuesday.

The Chinese were caught in Dnepropetrovsk on January 29 as they obtained a series of papers on the design of engines for intercontinental ballistic missiles with the intention of smuggling them out to China later. The papers originate from the Yuzhnoye design office.

The violators of the missile technology control regime were expelled from Ukraine on the basis of Article 32 of the Law "On the Legal Status of Foreigners", with a five-year ban on entry to Ukraine.

National Affairs

Ukrainian Minister Explains Refusal To Join CIS Council

AU3101100196 Kiev DEMOKRATYCHNA UKRAYINA in Ukrainian 27 Jan 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "We Must Mind Our Own Business...."]

[FBIS Translated Text] **Ukraine's Interior Minister Yuriy Kravchenko gave a negative assessment to the decision on creating a council of CIS interior ministers. Let us remind our readers that such a decision was adopted at the 19 January Moscow summit. As is known, Ukraine did not approve the decision on creating such a council.**

"I do not see any need for somebody to monitor criminal processes on Ukrainian territory and then offer recommendations on how to deal with them," said the minister. He emphasized that Ukraine's Ministry of Internal Affairs has its own analytical apparatus for studying these processes.

Ukrainian Rukh Protests State Monopoly of TV Broadcasting

LD3001201896 Kiev UNIAR in Ukrainian
1730 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev, 30 Jan — "The disappearance of the "Pislyamova" [Epilogue] program from the first channel of Ukrainian Television has again reminded us what a danger to society there is in the monopoly of bodies of state power over the mass media," says a People's Movement of Ukraine [Rukh] statement on the situation with regard to freedom of speech in Ukraine. "Whereas financial methods are mainly used to influence the printed mass media, deliberate administrative dictates are used on the electronic mass media. In particular, the management of state television completely determines the content and quality of broadcasting on all of the nationwide television channels in Ukraine."

Rukh believes that the National Council for Television and Radio Broadcasting should take urgent measures to demonopolize television channels, and expand the network of regional private television and radio channels.

Ukrainian Nuclear Plant on Terrorist Alert

LD3101110196 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian
0940 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Khmelnitskiy Region, 31 January — Fire brigade managers at the Khmelnistkiy nuclear power plant received an anonymous telephone call this morning, warning them about an imminent terrorist act at the plant, the Ministry of Environment and Nuclear Safety nuclear control administration told UNIAN.

The warning was passed on to the plant management, local and central offices of the Ukrainian Security Service and the State Nuclear Inspection. Staff at the nuclear plant have been instructed to stop the reactor of the first generating unit at the slightest indication of threat. The unit, which supplies power to the nearby town of Betishin, was disconnected from the power grid a week ago due to serious damage in the power generator.

The caller did not disclose either the motive for the possible terrorist act or the identity of the people responsible.

Development of Ukrainian Strategic Data Base Urged

WS3001152596 Kiev KIYEVSKIYE VEDOMOSTI in Russian 19 Jan 96 pp 1, 18

[Article by Viktor Sylchenko: "Ukraine Is Facing Possible Wars and Disasters Unarmed Because It Is Lagging Behind in the Area of Geoinformation Systems"]

[FBIS Translated Text] **For some reason we have decided that fate left us alone after sending the Chernobyl disaster on us, according to the principle saying that "a shell does not hit the same place twice." But what if something different, unforeseen, and hard to imagine happens? An earthquake, plague, explosion of hydrogen sulfide in the Black Sea, or, finally, a war? Are we ready to counter it?**

When Tragedy Breaks Out

What is needed most in case of a natural disaster? Detachments of rescuers? Transportation means and equipment? Pharmaceuticals? Nothing of the kind. Information is the most important thing.

Until recently, information was received from the site of an accident by telephone. A map would then be unrolled, possible consequences approximated, and decisions made. The Chernobyl disaster, however, as a litmus test, revealed the uselessness of antediluvian methods in emergencies. As a matter of fact, it was a method of "trial and error."

There is a special monitoring room at Washington's White House. In case of a large-scale event, the U.S. President goes there and immediately receives exhaustive data. This is possible because a special program is "loaded" in the president's computers. It is based on a geoinformation system (GIS).

What does a GIS represent?

This is a data base concerning the entire country, in which every part of a map is amended by all possible additional information. It is possible to see the relief of an area in which a disaster occurred — a kind of scale model amended by photographs of individual complexes of buildings. For example, if oil spills from a pipeline, one will know where it will flow. If a gasoline reservoir explodes in a city, the entire populated area appears in front of us, and it is possible to imagine the damage. A GIS will provide data on the number of people to be evacuated, moreover, broken down into categories — children, the elderly, women, and men. It will specify dangerous facilities located in the vicinity. Furthermore, the system will not only preliminarily analyze the situation, but also inform what measures have previously been taken in similar cases. The largest oil extracting and refining companies and chemical concerns, too, have such systems.

The Ukrainian president does not yet have a similar monitoring system. As I have learned at the Presidential Administration, the computerization of the process of collecting information about the entire country is at an initial stage. Modem connections are not even established with all oblasts. Efforts are being undertaken in this area, and an impressive amount of money has been earmarked for the developers, still... I will take the liberty to ask the following fundamental question: Why should we develop everything by the method of trial and error? Technology can simply be purchased from the Americans, all the more so, since distributors of a U.S. institute specializing in GIS are currently in Kiev. This will not cost very much.

The Chernobyl disaster prompted the use of GIS in Ukraine. Here is what GIS specialist Yevhen Seredynin says:

"Much has actually been done in this area over the past few years. Unfortunately, many people who worked in Chernobyl went to the accident zone only to receive higher wages. Significant accomplishments were thus uncoordinated. It is enough to say that there is no complete map of the affected area. The Belarusians have something, the Russians — something else, and we — still different things. All this must be combined."

By the way, at the infamous Three-Mile Island nuclear power plant in the United States, a GIS is used to... fight the fear of radiation among the local population. Everybody can visit the plant and receive full computerized information about the situation with regard to radiation in their areas.

In some areas of Ukraine, GIS's are being applied anyway. Landscape architects in Kiev are successfully using a system donated by the U.S. Intergraph Company.

A program for environmental monitoring is operating in Dnepropetrovsk. The Institute of Protection of Cultural Monuments is developing a program for cataloging Ukraine's cultural heritage. Yet, these are merely the first steps. We need a national strategic data base. The normal process of governing a country is currently very difficult without it.

GIS's are needed not only in case of a cataclysm. In Paris, a GIS monitors the condition of the city's sewage system. (Had we had such a system, the troubles in Kharkov [accident at a water treatment plant], perhaps, would not have occurred). In Shanghai, a GIS controls street and pedestrian traffic during rush hour. There is an endless list of areas in which GIS's can be used.

And What If There Is a War?

The peaceful policy of the Ukrainian state does not mean at all that our combat readiness can remain at the World War II level. Plus, there is no area in which GIS's would be applied as efficiently as in the military. Here is what Lieutenant Colonel Valeriy Moyseyev, expert from the Kiev Air Force Institute, says:

GIS's can, for example, ask a computer what enemy forces are deployed within an 100-kilometer range in a certain direction. They are able to separate a certain class of objects — "moving objects," "objects with barrels," or "armored personnel carriers." Only GIS's make it possible to attach a plan for combat actions to the relief of an area, and clearly see it. A computer will suggest possible tactical decisions, and present their visible models.

For example, a flight of a cruise missile is impossible without taking into account the relief of an area and magnetic anomalies along the entire route. Provided there is quite complete information loaded into a computer, the latter delivers the optimum itinerary within a second.

For quite understandable reasons, I have not managed to clarify to what degree GIS's are used in the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Nevertheless, I have indirectly learned that the Russian Defense Ministry still "holds the majority stake," to put it this way. If this is really so, the situation should be immediately improved, moreover, keeping in mind that the CIA is the main customer of a Californian institute, one of the largest GIS developers in the world.

Even the Market Is Not a Market Without GIS

Land is one of the most valuable goods in a market economy. To know its price, however, it is necessary to have complete information, and not only about soil, the surface layer, but also about things lying deep in the bowels of the earth. Just imagine: A land plot is sold (or allotted) for construction, and then it comes out that a gold-bearing layer or oil deposit are under it. All information about useful minerals should be logged into a national strategic data base. What is the current status of this information in Ukraine?

"Ukraine's geological resources are listed on paper," Yevhen Seredynin says. "Moreover, the original documents remain in Russia. We have their copies. This is a pile of old, worn out maps. This smacks of the Middle Ages, in the computer era!"

A GIS is not merely a reference book, but also a consultant. For instance, we hold negotiations with Polish businessmen on deliveries of gravel from Zhytomyr. A GIS will not only provide a report on the existing resources, but it will also help take into account transport possibilities and routes for deliveries, assess whether a deal is profitable or not, set a precise price, and avoid wasting resources.

It is impossible to enter a worldwide economic system without information corresponding to the world standards and logged in modern media. It is impossible to bargain with a partner "using one's fingers," as the saying goes. After all, "he who possesses information owns the world." People from most Western countries have mastered this quite well. All forest resources in Canada are catalogued with the help of the "Arch/Forest" program. In Greece, a GIS "has memorized" all useful minerals. With the help of GIS's, land is surveyed is Israel, Mexico, and Brazil. Even in such a country as Peru, there is already a national data base for energy sources. But we do not have it.

The lack of complex systems of processing geophysical information makes us dependable on countries which do have such systems. For example, one of the National Academy of Sciences organizations has had its data processed in the United States, another one — in Canada. Can it not occur that those who are processing information will be better informed than the customers? Will we not have to buy our own information abroad?

So, a national strategic data base is essential for Ukraine. A program for its development should be a state one, and supervised by the president and the government. The lack of such a data base already cost us considerable losses, places us in the position of a "second-rate" country in the international market, and makes us vulnerable in the area of national security. Society does not yet understand this. Is it true that another Chernobyl disaster, or something even worse, is needed to wake us up?

Economic Issues

Kuchma: 1996 'Turning Point' in Ukraine Economy

AU3101100396 Kiev DEMOKRATYCHNA UKRAYINA in Ukrainian 27 Jan 96 p 1

[Report by UKRINFORM correspondent Valentyn Vernodubenko: "L. Kuchma: The Situation in the Economy Has Improved"]

[FBIS Translated Text] I am convinced, stressed the Ukrainian president, that the situation in the economy today has considerably improved, for example, as compared with the year 1994. Precisely this is indicated by the fact that the growth of the population's real income is beginning to overtake the growth of inflation. Enterprises are gradually gaining momentum and inflation no longer "eats up" funds in circulation. Please do not take this as just lofty words, but the year 1996 is going to be a turning point, a year of improvement in Ukraine's economic situation.

From the Zaporizhzhya Airport, Leonid Kuchma went to the urban settlement Stepnohirsk. There, the president met with the leadership of Vasylivskyy Rayon and also of the Tavriya Mining-Concentration Combine, whose fate has already been sealed — the enterprise will be closed down. As a result, more than 7,000 residents of the settlement that depended fully on the mining- concentration combine have found themselves in a difficult situation.

"Using this as an example, we must work out a mechanism for liquidating enterprises and also for resolving social problems, transfer of facilities, problems of employment, and other issues," underscored the Ukrainian president. He promised residents of the settlement his help in granting them the necessary assistance,

After Stepnohirsk, Leonid Kuchma arrived in Enerhodar. There, he familiarized himself with the operation of the sixth power unit of the Zaporizhzhya AES [Atomic Electric Power Plant], met with representatives of the plant, and handed awards to the operational personnel for commissioning the sixth power unit.

Ukraine Supreme Council Adopts Privatization Law

LD3001202996 Kiev UNIAN in Ukrainian 1900 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kiev — On 30 January the Ukrainian Supreme Council adopted a law on the singularities of privatizing property in the agro-industrial complex.

Leonid Kuchma had not signed the law adopted by parliament, which in fact meant that he applied his veto to it, which parliament would have had to overcome with two-thirds of the votes (278 votes). However, only 261 deputies voted for the law.

According to parliament Chairman Oleksandr Moroz, as parliament has in fact taken into account all of the observations, agreement was reached with the Ukrainian president on signing the law.

Valentyna Semenyuk, a member of the Supreme Council Commission for the Agro-Industrial Complex, Land Resources, and Socioeconomic Development of Rural Areas, told journalists that "a compromise had in fact been reached with the president" on the contentious articles. Thus, the transfer of 51 percent of shares of processing enterprises being privatized to agricultural enterprises free of charge will be to legal entities, as proposed by the law. However, they will have the right to set up trust companies and accept certificates from physical entities.

At the president's proposal, the provision that not only the government but the Ukrainian Supreme Council too can determine the controlling package of shares has been removed from the text of the law.

According to Valentyna Semenyuk, parliament's role in this process will be envisaged in the state privatization program.

Belarus

Russian Foreign Minister Primakov Visits Belarus

Syanko Meets Russian Foreign Minister

LD3001202896 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1700 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov is on a two-day official visit in Belarus. Here is our correspondent Yuriy Sverko from Minsk.

[Sverko] The first day of the first official visit by Yevgeniy Primakov abroad began with talks with his Belarusian counterpart Uladzimir Syanko. At the meeting the two ministers discussed various issues of bilateral relations, above all economic ones. In the opinion of Syanko, economic integration of Russia and Belarus has fallen behind their military and political integration. On his arrival at Minsk-2 airport, the Russian foreign minister noted that he attached very great importance to his visit to Belarus. Primakov said that the Russian and Belarusian nations were linked by their common history and their common destiny and that their ties must develop very intensively. Primakov stressed we are satisfied over current progress in our relations. Integrational processes will not affect the sovereignty of the republics, which is irreversible. But at the same time we are closer to one another, and that is also natural, the Russian foreign minister said.

Still at the airport he described Belarusian land as sacred. After the talks with Uladzimir Syanko, he laid a wreath at the monument to the liberators at the Victory Square in Minsk. At the moment Primakov is meeting Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka. Asked by the correspondent of the Russian television and radio company whether they will discuss the possible return to Belarus of the nuclear missiles which had earlier been removed to Russia in connection with NATO's expansion, Primakov said he was not going to raise the issue. However subjects for discussion will be picked by President Lukashenka. [passage omitted]

Lukashenka, Primakov Discuss Integration

LD3101115696 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1011 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MINSK, Jan 30 (Interfax) — Russia and Belarus "have created a legal basis for intensifying integration between them," Belarus President Alyaksandr Lukashenka told journalists following his talks with Russia's Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov, who had arrived in Minsk for a two-day visit.

Lukashenka said that "a new round of talks between the Russian and Belarusian leaders is needed to promote integration." He also said that this particular question had been discussed with Primakov.

Primakov extended Lukashenka an invitation to pay an official visit to Moscow in March.

He said that "Russian-Belarusian integration will in no way undermine the sovereignty of Belarus."

Speaking about NATO's plans for eastward enlargement, both Lukashenka and Primakov said they categorically opposed them.

Primakov gave to understand that Russia was ready "to meet some of the Eastern European countries' demands, but without the NATO military forces' movement to the east."

Lukashenka stated in his turn that "NATO's infrastructure has already appeared on the Belarusian borders." "This is felt by the population of Belarus very well," he said.

Primakov met with Belarus Prime Minister Mikhail Chyhgir and with the CIS Executive Secretary Ivan Korotchenya in Minsk Tuesday.

On the same day Lukashenka and Primakov met once again for one- on-one talks. No statements were made after the talks.

Primakov Invites Lukashenka to Moscow

LD3101070496 Moscow Mayak Radio Network in Russian 0400 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov, will arrive in the Ukraine today to prepare the necessary documents for President Yeltsin's official visit. [passage omitted] He is currently in Belarus.

Belarussian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka told journalists the day before that Russia and Belarus had created legal space, which would be important for the development of the intergration processes between the two countries. The head of the Russian foreign ministry conveyed a message to Lukashenka, inviting him to visit Moscow in March. Lukashenka and Primakov expressed their negative attitude to NATO's eastward expansion.

Primakov's Minsk Activities Reviewed

WS3101102196 Minsk BELAPAN in English 0751 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] At noon on January 30 a regular Belavia plane conveyed Russia's Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov to Minsk. This is the first official visit of the newly appointed minister. At the Minsk-2 airport he was met by his Belarusian counterpart Uladzimir Syanko and other officials. It should be noted that waiting for a statement for the press a number of reporters gathered at the airport. But the ministers did not make any statements. The Russian minister only expressed gratitude to Uladzimir Syanko for the invitation to arrive in the "sovereign" Republic on an official visit. In a short conversation with reporters at the ladder Mr. Primakov said: "I attach great importance to this visit. Our countries and nations are linked by the common history and common destiny." He stressed that Belarusian-Russian relations should be developed in an extremely intensive way. Integration processes are of particular importance, but, according to the head of the Russian foreign office, "they will not infringe upon the sovereignty of the Republics at all".

In his turn Mr. Syanko said that the process integration of Belarus and Russia is not an easy road, as the countries are to solve a lot of problems, but, as the minister stressed, they will be solved in the spirit of sincerity and understanding of the necessity of economic and other ties with Russia. Asked whether the question of the Russian strategic weaponry on the territory of Belarus will be raised during the forthcoming meeting between Mr. Primakov and President Lukashenka, the Russian minister answered he did not intend to cover it, but everything would depend on the President as it is he who will offer subjects for discussion.

By 3.00 pm. negotiations between the foreign ministers had been completed. On the afternoon of January 30 Mr. Primakov was also to meet President Alyaksandr Lukashenka, Prime Minister Mikhail Chyhir and CIS Executive Secretary Ivan Karatchenya.

Maltsaw To Sign Cooperation Accord With Ukraine

LD3001172196 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1415 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MINSK, Jan 30 (Interfax-West) — Belarusian Defense Minister Leanid Maltsaw and Ukrainian Defense Minister Valeriy Shmarov will sign a plan for bilateral cooperation for 1996.

The press service of the Belarusian Defense Ministry told Interfax Tuesday that the officials also plan to sign protocols on information exchange, on ensuring flight safety, on refuelling military air crafts and on mutual payments for lubricants, on educational and scientific exchange between military colleges of two states and on cooperation in the sphere of air defense.

For the time being the military departments of the two republics have failed to determine forms and methods of cooperation, but the need for close cooperation between neighboring states in the military field is quite obvious. "We should not leave 'cracks in bilateral relations' as an inheritance for our descendants," Shmarov said.

His counterpart believes that given national interests and the geopolitical situation of Belarus and Ukraine, the states "are forced to solve security issues jointly" because "stability in Europe greatly depends upon this fact."

During his two-day visit to Belarus, the Ukrainian Defense Minister will meet with Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka, Prime Minister Mikhail Chyhir and will address students of the Belarusian Military Academy.

Belarus Defense Ministry Notes Increased Arms Sales

WS3001152096 Minsk BELORUSSKAYA DELOVAYA GAZETA in Russian 25 Jan 96 p 10

[Article attributed to SIM news agency: "The Defense Ministry Expands the Arms Trade"]

[FBIS Translated Text] As the SIM news agency has learned from competent sources, the Belarusian Defense Ministry has substantially stepped up its foreign trade activities this year. Thanks to the foreign trade, the Ministry hopes to secure additional funds for developing the social sphere.

In particular, a large delegation from the General Staff and Baranavichi Aviation Repair Plant (ARZ) left for Beijing on 22 January. The delegation is expected to sign an agreement between the Chinese and Belarusian Defense Ministries according to which the ARZ would conduct radical a overhaul of Chinese combat aircraft. In addition, it will discuss issues pertaining to further cooperation and, in particular, organization of training programs at the plant for foreign specialists.

Another issue that may also be examined is an agreement on providing training at the military academy for future Chinese officers in the most sought-after specialties (antiaircraft troops, communications, and artillery).

Belarusian foreign trade organizations engaged in arms sales are displaying increased activity. For example, a contract negotiated by "Beltekheksport" with a company from one of the Balkan states for sales of air free-flight rockets is being finalized. Notably, the initiative to make the deal came from the Belarusian Defense Ministry. However, according to available information, the implementation of such a lucrative contract for the country meets with opposition on the part of certain state structures directly involved in arms sales. It may be possible that some bureaucrats are lobbying the interests of other foreign trade companies operating in the same business.

Moreover, it has been reported that a range of contracts for selling armored vehicles, firearms, and artillery ammunition can be implemented as soon as the next quarter. According to evidence received from reliable sources, the Iraqi Defense Ministry is intending to expand its contacts with Belarusian military officials. Such efforts, however, are accompanied by discussions to set confidentiality conditions preventing all leaks on the agreements concluded.

Along with China and Iraq, the potential partners for the Defense Ministries are Slovakia, Moldova, and Korea. In addition, visits by businessmen from several African countries that are willing to purchase military equipment from Belarus have become more frequent.

At the same time, some analysts believe that Belarusian arms selling activities will not be so promising in a year or two. They explain their opinion by a lack of the country's own VPK [military-industrial complex] enterprises manufacturing firearms and armored vehicles, as well as by the gradual devastation of Army bases, arms depots, and warehouses — whose property was sold abroad over the past five years and handed over to Belarusian Army units.

Moldova

Tiraspol-Chisinau Talks on Verge of Breakdown

LD3001184196 Moscow INTERFAX in English
1628 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TIRASPOL, Jan 30 (Interfax) — Talks on January 31 between the Moldovan and Transdniester leaders are about to breakdown.

"Representatives of the two sides are negotiating the conditions under which the meeting could take place, but many important problems remain unresolved," leader of Transdniester delegation at the talks with Moldova, state secretary of the self-proclaimed Transdniesterian Republic Valeriy Litskay told Interfax on Tuesday.

According to Litskay, "Chisinau insists on the exact date of the meeting — January 31, and on a tough agenda — to discuss and determine the status of Transdniester as part of Moldova, as well as the economic relations between the regions."

According to Litskay, for its part, Tiraspol is putting forward as a preliminary condition that the meeting be held on the left bank of the Dniester and insists that Chisinau lift embargo for delivery to Transdniester of the Transdniester rubles minted in Munich. The demand is an ultimatum and until it is fulfilled, the regional administration refuses to conduct the talks with Chisinau on Monday at expert level.

On Monday Moldovan Deputy Prime Minister Valentin Kunin discussed with representatives of the banking and financial quarters of Transdniester the possible meeting on January 31 and the situation with the Transdniester rubles minted in Germany.

According to leader of the Chisinau delegation at talks with Tiraspol, Moldovan First Deputy Justice Minister Mikhail Bushulyak, holding the meeting on January 31 under the present conditions is still in question, while the demands put forward by Tiraspol "violate" the republic's Constitution, according to which the Moldovan National Bank is the sole emittent on the republic's territory.

Andronic Rules Out Communist Victory in Moldova

AU3101075096 Chisinau INFOTAG in English
1930 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Chisinau, January 29 (INFOTAG) — Nothing can prevent Moldova from having the next presidential elections on time, believes Parliament member Nicolae Andronic, deputy chairman of the Party of Revival and Conciliation [PRCM]. In his interview, published in KISHINEVSKIYE NOVOSTI last Saturday [27 January], he said, "we do not consider ourselves as a powerful party. And, still, the PRCM has already established its structures in all Moldovan districts, including in Dniester. We are happy and proud of the fact that our party leader is President Snegur, the more so that he made this step in full accordance with law, and quite openly."

In Andronic's words, "the Agrarian Democratic Party has thrown local power bodies 'under the train,' thus having given to the impoverished population a full liberty of pouring their wrath first on local bosses and then on Chisinau rulers."

Having spoken for broadening the local governance, Andronic remarked that "local authorities have only one right — to collect taxes, because they were deprived of the right to shape local budgets. The government's power in ruling the local authorities is unlimited. All over the world, left-wing forces come to power through criticizing governing authorities. Moldovan socialists support the government which brought the population to a complete poverty. Their motivation is: There exists a tremendous risk that the current government may be replaced by more nationalistically-minded forces. In reality, they are just afraid of losing their posts. In that sense, Moldovan communists headed by Vladimir Voronin are by far more honest, and their tough criticism of the government is quite logic."

In his opinion, "communist ideas have never been deeply rooted in the Moldovan soil, and one should not plunge into euphoria about the Russian communists' victory. True reforms in Moldova may only begin when the population here gets a feeling of real people of property. In that connection, it is tremendously important for everybody to have the right to sell one's own land, particularly for collective farms. The non-observance of the Languages Law, passed as long ago as in 1989, leads to a situation when people just refuse to learn the official language... Those who facilitate to the endless postponements of language knowledge examinations do nothing but harm for ethnic non-Moldovans. If only non-Moldovans' interests are respected, then a new wave of nationalism may emerge," he stressed.

Nicolae Andronic explained why Mircea Snegur again refused to okay the State Security Law, even after a re-consideration in parliament: "This law completely deprives the president of a possibility to influence the state security sphere."

Tajikistan

Primakov Visit Seen As Support for Rakhmanov

MM3001190196 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 30 Jan 96 p 7

[Reoort by Mikhail Shchipanov: "Primakov and Grachev in Dushanbe"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The first visit by the new Russian foreign minister, the symbolic nature of which we have discussed in detail in past issues, is also very important by virtue of the mounting domestic political tension in Tajikistan.

In fact, by making his first official visit to the countries of so-called nearby foreign parts, Yevgeniy Primakov has stressed the special significance of the privileged relationship with the former members of the Union for Russia's strategic interests. At the same time, the appearance of a very senior delegation from Moscow should be seen as a manifestation of the special confidence in the Tajik leader, E. Rakhmanov, personally, about whose resignation from the presidency there has been much talk in recent days.

The gist of the current Tajik domestic political situation is that presidential colleagues from the CIS countries have started making vigorous efforts to push Rakhmanov into a historic compromise with the opposition which has ensconced itself in the border lands. To make it more convincing, the Commonwealth partners even decided to extend the peacekeeping force's mandate only until the summer, giving Rakhmanov to understand that if the talks continued to be delayed he would have to continue them in a far less favorable situation. But they sugared the pill, as it were, and that is why Defense Minister Pavel Grachev went with Yevgeniy Primakov to Dushanbe.

But this is just one side of the Tajik coin. Almost simultaneously the situation in Tajikistan deteriorated: It is not some "basmaks," but some very official state dignitaries who have taken firm action against the government, demanding certain concessions and cadre changes. Suffice it to say that in the large city of Kurgan-Tyube an army brigade rebelled and blockaded the local internal affairs administration. Actually, this is not the first action by ostensibly progovernment Tajik regular soldiers, who, it appears, engage more in politics than in the actual defense of state territory.

In this context Rakhmanov was doubly in need of solidarity under the CIS banner. Particularly as most of the "rebels" belonged to the Uzbek minority of Tajikistan, as many observers rightly said. But the mutual status of the Uzbek community in Tajikistan and the Tajik community in Uzbekistan is not the most difficult problem in relations between Tashkent and Dushanbe. Often it has been stressed by Tajik leaders that Tashkent is taking advantage of the situation to bring extra pressure to bear and increase its influence on Dushanbe. That is why Rakhmanov needed declarations of support both from Russia and from Tashkent, which has also been visited by Primakov's delegation. These declarations were made, and against the background of all Tajikistan's internal vicissitudes one thing is clear: Rakhmanov will continue to be supported in his efforts to arrange an inter-Tajik dialogue. Incidentally, the latest round of talks between the Tajik authorities and the opposition was supposed to start yesterday.

Tajik Rebel Leader Speaks to Foreign Media

LD3101120896 (Clandestine) Voice of Free Tajikistan in Uzbek 0300 GMT 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The rebels opposing Emomali Rakhmanov's regime in Tursunzade and Kurgan-Tyube — who now have fresh, new forces — have refused the demand of the Dushanbe authorities to surrender arms. Mahmud Khudoyberdiyev, leader of the Kurgan-Tyube rebels, has spoken to the foreign media, expressing the views of his supporters: The inhabitants can no longer bear the injustice and irresponsibility of the authorities; so we have demanded that they all resign. He admitted that he and his armed group had made serious mistakes during the civil war: Taking advantage of the present situation, the regime's authorities have been robbing Tajikistan of all its wealth and the people of their property; this has to be stopped. Khudoyberdiyev said at the end of these conversations: Only an agreement between the government and the united opposition will solve Tajikistan's crisis.

Tajikistan Premier Prepared To Resign To End Crisis

LD3001163696 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1443 GMT 30 Jan 96

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Galina Gridneva]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DUSHANBE, January 30 (Itar-Tass) — Tajik Prime Minister Jamshed Karimov said on Tuesday he is ready to resign if this move helps stabilise the situation in the whole of Tajikistan.

"I am ready to resign immediately if it helps ease tensions in the cities of Kurgan-Tyube and Tursunzade and stabilise the situation in the republic," Karimov told Itar-Tass. His deputies stick to the same opinion, he said.

The statement came in response to a demand by rebel Colonel Mahmud Khudoiberdyev and Ibodollo Boimatov that several Cabinet members should resign.

At the same time, Karimov sharply denounced the methods the rebels are using to put pressure on the government. All problems should be solved in a civilised manner, according to him.

The use of armoured vehicles may have unpredictable consequences. On this account, he reminded the tragic outcome of the 1992 civil war.

According to the Prime Minister, the current tragic events had been carefully planned by certain forces which are vehemently opposed to achieving peace and stability in Tajikistan.

Karimov also said that the attempted coup-d'etat was scheduled to begin on January 25, when the Tajik parliament was to meet in its third session.

The prime minister declared that at the present moment, the situation was under control. He stressed that the rebels's demands insisting on the resignation of the Cabinet concern some of its members only. "The present government consists of responsible people able to competently fulfil all the tasks," the prime minister said.

The government is prepared to resign at any moment if this helps stabilize the situation in Tajikistan, he said.

Rakhmanov Discusses Reforms With IMF Mission Chief

LD3001185496 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1628 GMT 30 Jan 96

DUSHANBE, Jan 30 (Interfax) - Tajik President Emomali Rakhmanov discussed a government program of reforms with the head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission in Tajikistan, Peter Killer, in Dushanbe Tuesday. Once implemented, the program will enable the republic to obtain an IMF loan of $22 million in late April, Presidential Press Secretary Zafar Saidov told Interfax.

"The preliminary economic measures" coordinated with the IMF include changes in the prices of bread, compensation payments, changes in salaries in budget-funded bodies, pensions and stipends, reform of the taxation system, revision of the system for repayment of the public debt and regulation of customs duties.

"A new phase in the country's movement towards a market economy opened with the parliament's approval of the program of economic reforms until 2000," Rakhmanov said.

The program will be implemented "in all its aspects" starting on March 1, 1996, Rakhmanov added.

Uzbekistan

Uzbek Population in Tajikistan Affected by Primakov Visit

MK3001135396 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 30 Jan 96 p 3

[Report by Irina Gribova: "Yevgeniy Primakov Talks With Islam Karimov"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Russia's new foreign minister, Yevgeniy Primakov, was in Tashkent for a working visit on 28 January. According to the official version, this arrival and the two-hour discussion with Uzbekistan President Islam Karimov that followed unveiled Mr. Primakov in his new capacity. However, the presence among those who accompanied Mr. Primakov of his first deputy, Boris Pastukhov, and General Grachev, as well as the Uzbekistan Foreign Ministry's statement to the effect that all information about the visit is strictly classified, makes one think that the unofficial explanation [of the visit's objective] was the worsening of the situation inside Tajikistan.

In the wake of Moscow's rather severe criticism of Dushanbe officials, President Emomali Rakhmanov tried to resign. The population of Leninabad Oblast, home to 1 million Uzbeks (Tajikistan's entire population is 5.7 million), received this decision with enthusiasm.

The Uzbek part of the population has failed of late to find a common language with Dushanbe officials: The people of Leninabad voted for their countryman Abdulmalik Abdulladzhanov, who lost the presidential elections; the oblast has long clamored to become part of Uzbekistan, something to which both Dushanbe and Tashkent react negatively; back in the days of the USSR, Leninabaders held key positions in governing the republic, but now they have been ousted by men from Kulyab led by their representative, Emomali Rakhmanov. Naturally, Kulyabans did not back Rakhmanov's decision to step down. They are most likely supported by the leaders of Russia and Uzbekistan, who see Rakhmanov as a legitimate and controllable political figure.

The current Russian political visit to Tashkent shows that Russia hopes that Uzbekistan will promote a relaxation of tensions in Tajikistan, especially after the hostage-taking and political demands advanced by the former mayor of the town of Tursunzade, the ethnic Uzbek Balmetov. It should be stressed here that Uzbekistan can influence not only the Uzbek diaspora in Leninabad Oblast, but can also ease the confrontation with the Tajik opposition, whose relations with Islam Karimov have clearly improved.

According to an unofficial source, Russia is prepared in exchange for these services to provide Uzbekistan with combat equipment and humanitarian aid on condition that part of it reaches Tajikistan.

Also discussed was the question of wider powers for the CIS peacekeeping forces along the border. For example, Russia once again tried to have the other Commonwealth members take over at least part of the responsibility for the Tajikistan-Afghanistan border under the treaty on guarding CIS borders.

This, however, did not enthuse the Uzbek leader, who remembered that there is a parliament. He stated that the solution to such a question is within the jurisdiction of the oliy mazhlis [parliament] rather than the president.

Armenia

Armenian Ministry Rejects Registration of Helsinki Committee Statute

NC3001223696 Yerevan NOYAN TAPAN in English 1309 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Yerevan, January 30 (Noyan Tapan)— Armenia's Justice Ministry has refused to register a statute of the Helsinki Committee of Armenia (HCA), alleging that organization's statute does not correspond to the Armenian legislation. HCA submitted its application for registration on December 14, 1995.

In a statement issued Tuesday [30 January] by HCA, Justice Ministry's decision is described as a violation of principles of democracy and the international conventions (in particular, Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Helsinki Accords) to which Armenia has acceded.

NT's Note: A constituent assembly of HCA took place in December 1995. Mikayl Danielyan was elected Chairman of HCA, while Avetik Ishkhanyan — its Director.

France To Construct Waste Depository at Armenian Nuclear Plant

NC3001220596 Yerevan NOYAN TAPAN in English 0847 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Yerevan, January 29 (Noyan Tapan)— "Framatom" French company for nuclear energy and Armenian NPP [Nuclear Power Plant] signed an agreement at Armenian Embassy to Paris today. On the part of Armenia the agreement was signed by Deputy Energy Minister Karen Galustyan and ANPP's [Armenian Nuclear Power Plant] Director Suren Azatyan. The agreement suggests construction of a waste depository for ANPP.

France will provide 40 million francs for the purpose of which 15.5 million as aid and the rest as a credit to be reraid during 40 years.

According to "Liberty" radio station, this agreement is one of the biggest signed by "Framatom" with any country of Central and Eastern Europe.

The French side will promote the construction which will be completed in 1997.

Speaking just after the agreement was signed Armenian Ambassador to France Vigen Chitechyan emphasized its ecological importance. According to him, it is great honor for Armenia to cooperate with the well-known French company. He also mentioned those countries which cooperated with ANPP earlier, in particular, Russia, Germany.

In his turn Director of "Framatom" company expressed admiration with the training level of Armenian specialists. "Professionalism of Armenian specialists in field of nuclear energy who managed to prepare the NPP for reactivation in such a short period of time impressed 'Framatom'. The Plant is currently working at 90 percent of its capacity, producing necessary for Armenian people energy", he added.

NPP's representatives answered questions concerning the reactivation of the second block. Deputy Energy Minister of Armenia considered it as untimely action due to some problems. "Our primary task today is to continue working on raising the second block's safety", he said. As far as the long opposition of the West in opening of ANPP Suren Azatyan said: "I think that is was not a victory over different countries but a victory of our people's talent, its great industry and conscientious attitude towards everything".

Emphasizing that West opposition was caused by rather political than technical reasons, Suren Azatyan told about great 3.5-year-long work to assure West specialists and then verify and bring in order the second block before it is reactivated. "If we were not fully confident in NPP's safety we would not open it", he emphasized. As a proof Mr. Azatyan said that during last three months ANPP was working normally.

Armenian President 'Closes' Issue on Premier's Resignation

LD3001182996 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1707 GMT 30 Jan 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] On Tuesday President Levon Ter-Petrosyan declined the letter on resignation presented by Prime Minister Grant Bagratyan, reliable sources in Yerevan told Interfax.

According to the sources, Ter-Petrosyan adopted this decision despite Bagratyan's persistent requests to accept his resignation. After that Ter-Petrosyan proposed to Bagratyan "to close this issue" and promised to Bagratyan that the latter will be able "to normally work in order to implement his program of socioeconomic reforms."

Rumors about Grant Bagratyan's probable resignation "due to inability to pursue his own program" appeared in the Armenian mass media in mid January, however, head of the government press service Vladimir Manoyan refuted these rumors.

At a press conference in Yerevan on January 24 leader of Armenia's leading party, the Armenian National

Movement, Usik Lazarian also refuted these reports as "groundless." He reminded that having approved the republican budget in late last year the parliament expressed a vote of confidence in Bagratyan and his Cabinet.

Lazarian also said that the Armenian National Movement supports the socioeconomic policy of the present government. Information: Vice President Gagik Arutyunyan, Armenian Ambassador in Great Britain Armen Sarkisyan, and head of the Central Bank of Armenia Bagrat Asatryan were mentioned among probable successors of the present premier.

Azerbaijan

Baku: Gabalinskaya Radar Station Not Russian Base

MK3101073196 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 30 Jan 96 p 3

[Report by Arif Useynov: "Gabalinskaya Radar Station Will Not Be Russia's Military Base"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Azerbaijan Defense Minister Safar Abiyev once again has put the record straight in an interview to the EKSKLYUZIV news agency by saying that the Gabalinskaya radar station "will never be a military base of Russia on the territory of Azerbaijan." The question of the status of the Gabalinskaya radar station, which the Russian media hastened to announce a military base of Russia on Azerbaijan's territory, has already been raised and a negative decision has been made. The statement has finally defined Baku's official stance on the legal ownership of the station — it has been declared "property of Azerbaijan" by a presidential edict.

In the meantime, a self-contained polling station functioned on the station's territory on the day of the elections for the Russian Federation State Duma, with nearly 1,000 servicemen and members of their families casting their ballots. According to some information, about 4,000 people, both military and civilian, live on the military compound at present.

As a result of frequent use of the Gabalinskaya radar station for its needs, the Russian Federation Defense Ministry has run up a debt of $18 million to the republic, according to Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry. Russian Federation Defense Minister Pavel Grachev promised to pay a part of the debt but asked for a deferment. The Russian military department's debt has created difficulties for the Azerbaijan's budget. Once, the Azerbaijani side proposed a mutual settlement involving a write-off of Azerbaijan's debt of $18 million. The issue remained undecided at that time, and it is being now once again taken up by experts.

Yerevan Starts Dialogue With Nakhichevan Without Baku

NC3001192296 Baku TURAN in English 1556 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku/30.01.96/TURAN—Personal representative of the effective chairman of the OSCE [Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe] for the Armenian-Azeri conflict Stanislav Pshigodsky, who is in Baku with on a business trip met with the permanent representatives of Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic in Baku Hasan Zeynalov.

"Stanislav Pshigodsky visited Nakhichevan in December last year became acquainted with the problems in Nakhichevan, with the damages caused to the republic by the Armenian aggressors. He shared the impression of that trip," Hasan Zeynalov told TURAN.

Hasan Zeynalov said that the question concerning Karki village, occupied by the Armenians at night 19, 1990 was also discussed during the meeting. "Karki village , as the whole Nakhichevan is the territory of Azerbaijan. Occupation Armenian troops are to be withdrawn from Karki village too, in accordance with the future peaceful agreement," Zeynalov told TURAN correspondent.

According Zeynalov, Mr. Pshigodsky stated about the will of the Armenian side to meet and have talks with the representatives of Nakhichevan. "We do not know what the Armenians are going to discuss with Nakhichevan, but they should make a dialogue with Baku. Nakhichivan is a component part of Azerbaijan," Zeynalov said.

Aliyev: One in Seven Azerbaijani's Are Refugees

LD3001195096 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1707 GMT 30 Jan 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Geydar Aliyev has called for humanitarian aid to his country to be increased.

At a meeting with ICRC [International Committee for the Red Cross] Secretary General George Weber in Baku on Monday he appealed to international humanitarian organizations including the Red Cross to help cope with the problem of one million Azeri refugees.

Aliyev said one in seven Azeris was a refugee, "a situation that none of the countries of the world has faced before." He blamed the refugees' plight on direct aggression by Armenia occupying 20 percent of Azeri lands.

For his part, Weber said the Red Cross had been great attention to the situation in Azerbaijan in the past few years by rendering aid to "almost a third of refugees."

Georgia

Georgia Parliament Ratifies Friendship Treaty With Russia

AU3101130796 Tbilisi IBERIA-SPEKTRI in Georgian 18 Jan 96 p 4

[Report by Elena Baratashvili: "It's Been Ratified"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt]

This Is the Kind of Submissiveness That There Should Be....

The main subject of discussion at the session of the new Georgian Parliament yesterday, 17 January, was ratification of the Treaty on Friendship, Good-Neighborly Relations, and Cooperation Between the Republic of Georgia and the Russian Federation.

As is known, this treaty was drawn up during the visit made by the Russian president to Tbilisi on 3 February 1994.

I cannot say that the deputies greeted this question with enthusiasm. Critical views were expressed. However, one deputy put forward a very strong argument: If we do not ratify this treaty, Russia will be offended!

"This treaty," explained L. Ghoghoberidze [head of the Union of Georgia's Citizens faction] to the deputies, "will help Georgia to settle many fundamental questions. For example, according to Article 3, Russia takes it upon itself to supply Georgia with weapons." [passage omitted]

The Parliament chairman [Zurab Zhvania] himself supported Mrs. Ghoghoberidze and said that Eduard Shevardnadze was to meet the Russian president in Moscow tomorrow. At the same time, the Russian television companies NOVOSTI and VESTI had broadcast information about the ratification of this treaty and so how could one now adopt any other decision. This document is the best that has ever been drawn up between Russia and Georgia. Z. Zhvania concluded by saying that Parliament should give its support to the treaty. There was no subsequent delay. The treaty was adopted by 141 votes with 34 against [the National-Democrats and the "Abkhazia" deputation voted against it]. [passage omitted]

Abkhaz Leader Says Russian Sanctions Will Not Work

LD3001161796 Tbilisi IBERIA in Georgian 1345 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sukhumi, 30 Jan — Abkhaz "President" Vladislav Ardzinba held a news conference in Sukhumi on 29 January. In connection with the documents adopted on 19 January at the Moscow summit, Ardzinba said that in fact there was nothing new for Abkhazia in the documents and that for two years the Russian Federation has been carrying out an economic blockade against Abkhazia in order to force it into joining Georgia.

In Ardzinba's words, Abkhazia has not signed a single agreement on economic cooperation with the CIS member states. He noted that the economic pressure would not force Abkhazia to give up its sovereignty. As for expanding the mandate to peacekeeping forces, in Ardzinba's words Abkhazia categorically opposes giving a policing mandate to peacekeeping forces. Despite this, he voiced hope that Georgia and Abkhazia will be able to resolve the conflict peacefully.

Abkhaz Leader To Hold Talks With Moscow on Settlement

LD3001180596 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1628 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Jan 30 (Interfax) — Abkhazian leader Vladislav Ardzinba said that he will hold political consultations with the Russian leadership on comprehensive settlement in Abkhazia.

In particular, the consultations will discuss the latest CIS summit decision "to isolate Abkhazia," he told Interfax Tuesday evening upon his arrival in Moscow.

The April 4, 1994 statement on the political settlement of the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict remains the main document, on the basis of which the Abkhazian issue must be solved, Ardzinba said.

As Georgia and Abkhazia signed this document, they committed themselves to strictly observe the ceasefire agreement and reiterated their earlier obligations not to use force and not to threaten to use force against each other.

The statement stipulated that "Abkhazia will have its own constitution, legislation, and corresponding state attributes such as the anthem, the state emblem and the flag." The sides also agreed on joint competence in such areas as foreign policy, foreign economic relations, the border service, customs controls, power engineering, transport, communications, environmental protection and the enforcement of human, civil and ethnic rights.

An agreement on the voluntary repatriation of refugees was incorporated in the statement.

Estonia

Tallinn, Moscow Unable To Agree on Borders

LD2901184296 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1648 GMT 29 Jan 96

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Another round of the Estonian-Russian talks on borders which ended in Tallinn, has produced no visible results. The two sides appeared not prepared to reach accord concerning the recognition of the Tartu 1920 peace treaty as operating.

The Estonian chief negotiator Raul Ma'lk noted at the news conference the importance of this document "as the basis for the current Estonia's statehood."

Moscow expressed preparedness to recognize only the historical value of the treaty because in 1940 "Estonia stopped being the subject of international law."

The Russian chief negotiator Vassiliy Svirin has said that on Jan 12, 1991 Russia recognized the independence and sovereignty of the Estonian Republic having signed the bilateral agreement "On the Principle of Inter-State Relations" and does not intend to give up it.

The chief negotiators noted at the same time a certain progress in the solution of technical problems. The negotiators finished work over the provision on describing the ground border which will be the basis for laying the border line by experts. Principally, it will mainly go along the current border line.

The Russian side expressed interest to 13.5 square kilometers of the water area of Lake Chudskoye which will make it possible for the country to improve lake navigation.

Estonia is interested that it be given part of the ground territory where a relative finno-ugrian nation of setu lives.

Work has practically completed over an agreement on the sea border. The two sides are to discuss with Finland the coordinates for the border passage at the point of confluence of territorial waters of the three states.

Vahi, Russian Envoy Discuss Improvement of Relations

WS3001094796 Tallinn BNS in English 1702 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tallinn, Jan 29, BNS — Estonian Prime Minister Tiit Vahi Monday met with Russian Ambassador Aleksandr Trofimov who informed the prime minister of the official Russian position on the actual state of relations between the two countries and possibilities for the improvement of contacts.

Speaking of Russia's prioirities, Ambassador Trofimov named humanitarian and political issues, including those connected with Estonia's Russian-speaking population, the government's press officer told BNS.

Trofimov also stressed the importance of the conclusion of an agreement on borders, along with economic cooperation and religious issues.

Vahi explained to the Russian ambassador Estonia's position on the Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church and the Estonian Orthodox church subordinated to the Moscow patriarchate.

Dwelling on trade and economic relations between the two countries, the prime minister said they could only develop on the basis of agreements. There were 15 agreements in force between Estonia and Russia and several other humanitarian and cooperation agreements about to be concluded.

Vahi assured Trofimov that Estonia was always interested in improving its relations with Russia. A precondition for the improvement of relations, the Estonian prime minister said, was to bring the two countries' views on important questions closer to each other, after which a meeting on heads of government level could be discussed.

Latvia

Birkavs To Vote for Russia's Admission to Council of Europe

LD2901173096 Riga Radio Riga Network in Latvian 1400 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Latvian Foreign Minister Valdis Birkavs will have to vote for Russia's admission to the Council of Europe in spite of the fact that the Latvian parliamentary delegation has a negative attitude toward this, Andrejs Pantelejevs, member of the Latvian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, stated today. The governments of democratic European countries have decided to support Russia's admission. Therefore, the Latvian Government will not object either.

Gundars Valdmanis, member of the Latvian delegation, today said that this had been exactly the reason why Aleksandrs Kirsteins and Juris Sinka, two members of the delegation who represented the government, could not take part in the voting. Pantelejevs and Valdmanis voted against.

Explaining his stance, Pantelejevs said that Russia's admission to the Council of Europe will not improve democratic processes in Russia itself, but rather will limit this organization's ability to influence the processes of democratic development. Pantelejevs said that it is doubtful that anyone living 10 km outside Sadovoye Koltso [inner ring road of Moscow] knows what the Council of Europe is, and that life in Russia is influenced by completely different factors. [passage omitted]

Latvia Cabinet Approves Russian Agreement on Border Issues

LD3001194196 Riga Radio Riga Network in Latvian 1700 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Cabinet of Ministers today approved an agreement between the Latvian and Russian governments on cooperation in border guarding issues. The draft agreement provides for cooperation between the two countries in exchanging information, and in coordinating measures to avoid border violations and smuggling across the border. It also provides for cooperation in coordinating more effective search measures and in perfecting the activities of the border checkpoints. The government also resolved to hand over several former Russian military installations belonging to the Defense Ministry to the local authority in the (Dobele) district.

Lithuania

Brazauskas Dismisses Prime Minister, Interior Minister

LD2901182696 Vilnius Radio Vilnius Network in Lithuanian 1700 GMT 29 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Lithuanian President Algirdas signed a decree today on relieving Prime Minister Adolfas Slezevicius from his duties and another decree on accepting the resignation of Interior Minister Romasis Vaitiekunas. Speaking to journalists, the Lithuanian president said:

[Begin Brazauskas recording] I would like to read out some documents. The first one is a decree that I signed this afternoon. It says: In accordance with Part 5 of Article 48 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, I suggest that the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania should approve that Adolfas Slezevicius, the prime minister of the Republic of Lithuania, be relieved from his duties. I suggest that the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania should discuss this question on 8 February 1996. This decree will become valid on the day it is signed.

Another decree. In accordance with the Part 7 of the same article, Article 48, and taking into consideration a request by Minister Romasis Vaitiekunas to this effect, I accept the resignation of Romasis Vaitiekunas, the minister of the interior of the Republic of Lithuania. This decree will also become valid on the day it is signed.

Now, I would like to read an address to the people of Lithuania.

My dear people of Lithuania. Today, I signed a decree suggesting that the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania should approve relieving Prime Minister Adolfas Slezevicius from his duties. Because I would like to give an opportunity and allow some time to him and the Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party, of which Slezevicius is a chairman, for making their decisions, I proposed that this issue should be discussed by the Seimas on 8 February.

This decision was not easy to make, and it took more than one day to mature. It was determined by the behavior of the prime minister on the eve of the crisis that faced some Lithuanian banks. True, it is difficult to dismiss a head of government, who worked energetically, persistently, and intelligently for three years and indeed, considerably contributed to the beginning of improvement of the Lithuanian economy.

However, the reputation of the top state officials cannot be darkened even by a slightest shadow.

I would like to tell the people of Lithuania that the measures aimed at reviving the banks' activities and protecting depositors' interests, which were planned by the government and the Bank of Lithuania and coordinated with international organizations, will be consistently implemented no matter who heads the government. There is no threat for normal activities of the government institutions.

I would like to extend a separate address to the members of the Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party. The three years that have passed since the elections in 1992 were far from easy, they were full of contradictions, yet full of meaningful work, too. I hope that you will assess the present situation in a politically wise and tolerant manner. [end recording]

Slezevicius Will Not Voluntarily Resign

LD3001130896 Vilnius Radio Vilnius Network in Lithuanian 1200 GMT 30 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Adolfas Slezevicius categorically refused to submit a letter of resignation prior to the debate in the Seimas on the presidential decree relieving him of his duties.

Answering a question from the BALTIC NEWS SERVICE correspondent today about whether his resignation can be expected, the prime minister gave an unconditional answer: Never! I am not the kind of person who says something first, then thinks about it, and eventually changes his mind, Adolfas Slezevicius said, reconfirming his determination not to leave the post voluntarily.

Slezevicius Interviewed on Dismissal, Budget, Banking

LD3101125496 Vilnius Radio Vilnius Network in Lithuanian 0830 GMT 31 Jan 96

[Studio interview of Lithuanian Prime Minister Adolfas Slezevicius and Finance Minister Reinoldijus Sarkinas by Adolfas Drungilas — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Drungilas] It would be difficult to find a question that has not been asked yet by the media on the events at the end of December and in January. Many things have already been clarified. Now we are waiting for 8 February [date Seimas will debate Slezevicius' dismissal proposed by President Algirdas Brazauskas]. However, we still have a whole week left, and there are many events to talk about. Certainly, we will not escape the hottest issue of the day, which is being discussed so widely.

[Slezevicius] Good morning, my dear listeners. Indeed, the hottest issue of this week are two edicts signed by the president. One of these edicts is about me: It is a proposal to the Seimas to relieve me from my duties. I think that it is a perfectly normal constitutional procedure. Some people, however, regard it as a serious problem.

However, I believe that the story of me withdrawing a deposit and of allegedly inflated interest having been calculated is only a formal pretext. The genuine reason lies deeper than this. To a certain extent I am disappointed that the president chose to support a demand from the opposition, since this was indeed a demand only from the opposition. By the way, in November the opposition came up with precisely the same demand and there was an interpellation to the government, that is, to me and Interior Minister Romasis Vaitiekunas. Now things have taken a new turn.

I would like to say one thing: Whatever decision the Seimas adopts on 8 February, I will accept it with a clear conscience. It is obvious that no-one will ever be able to deny the fact that under the present majority in the Seimas and with the government of the Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party, which I had the honor to head, major breakthroughs were achieved in various spheres of life in our country: in foreign policy, the economy, social affairs, and agriculture. In this sense, my conscience is clear. These results were determined, to a large extent, by the support of my colleagues from the cabinet of ministers. We worked together very closely.

Now I understand that Mr. Slezevicius became a large obstacle on the way to the openly campaigned early elections to the Seimas. Whether this political fever will be beneficial to the depositors and debtors and other people, the immediate future will show. I have already said it, and I would like to state my position again: Both the person who signed the edict [Brazauskas] and those who will vote in favor of it will, in a way, assume all responsibility for the consequences that will follow. That is all as far as your question is concerned. I would not like to discuss this matter any further. [passage omitted]

In February and in March the government will have to make a number of important decisions on power engineering, agriculture, and social affairs. The government will have to make certain amendments to the budget, which will be needed to eliminate the financial consequences of the banking problems. [passage omitted]

[Drungilas] Do you plan any changes of the ministries' structure and activities?

[Slezevicius] No, there are no plans to this effect. There is no reason for doing that. We are rather successfully implementing the government program, which was approved by the Seimas and later amended. The commitments in the social sphere that have been undertaken have to be met as well. As you know, we presented and the Seimas approved a socially orientated budget for 1996. Our commitments concerning the increase of the minimum statutory wage, pensions, and overall increase of wages are quite substantial, and they are being fully implemented despite the problems in the banking sphere. [passage omitted]

[Drungilas] Maybe you know you would be the candidate for prime minister, if the Seimas does not vote in your favor?

[Slezevicius] No, I do not know who may be the candidate. There is a number of very talented ministers among my colleagues, and a list of candidates could be very long. I am not in a position to comment on the suitability of one or another candidate at this point, and I will never do this. [passage omitted]

[Drungilas] Some newspapers are discussing candidates for prime minister already. I read today that Mr. Sarkinas is among the candidates. Mr. Sarkinas — you are here in our studio now — is it possible that later you may take part in our program as a prime minister?

[Sarkinas] I think it was a very unsuccessful joke to mention my name.

[Drungilas] Maybe we could now speculate or forecast on who could take the vacant post of minister of interior.

[Slezevicius] There is no room for abstract speculations here, simply a specific candidate has to be chosen. However, now that my situation is so vague, I am not in a position to comment on this matter and I will not do that.

[Drungilas] Now, about the banking matter and its relation to the budget. People say that budget revenue collection may be very difficult this year. Where will funds for rescuing banks come from? [passage omitted]

[Slezevicius] Excuse me, who said that budget revenue may be very tight? Certainly, there are certain difficulties at present, because part of the money is lost at the suspended banks, enterprises cannot pay taxes because their funds are frozen, and the shortfall currently exceeds 40 million litas, but it a relatively insignificant amount. It is equal to the budget revenue for about two or two and a half days. This problem can be solved quite easily. [passage omitted]

Slezevicius Returns Deposit to Insolvent Bank

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[FBIS Translated Text] The deposit of Prime Minister Adolfas Slezevicius of 135,162.11 litas [approximately $34,000 dollars], which was withdrawn by his assistant Juozas Palionis from the Lithuanian Joint-Stock Innovation Bank on 18 December, was returned to the bank today, the government's spokesman reported.

The head of government's personal savings will be kept only in a safe-deposit box of the bank for the time being. A decision by the Board of Directors of the Bank of Lithuania is required for accepting them to a deposit account. The prime minister has already addressed the Board of Directors of the Bank of Lithuania with a request to give permission for such a transaction.

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